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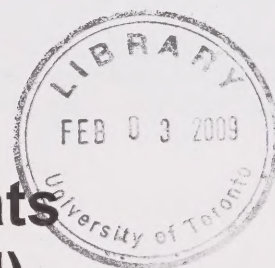
First Session, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 39<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)



Sunday 25 January 2009

Dimanche 25 janvier 2009

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Sunday 25 January 2009

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Dimanche 25 janvier 2009

*The House met at 1300.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Please remain standing for the prayer.

*Prayers.*

## ACCESS TO PUBLIC GALLERY

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Good afternoon. I just want to draw members' attention to the fact that, as you will see, due to maintenance and repair work in the public galleries those galleries are currently not available and are closed to public access. The members' galleries are available in the normal way, and I have made the Speaker's gallery available for public seating as well.

Further, I've arranged for two committee rooms to be set up with televisions so that people may still observe the proceedings even if they cannot be accommodated in the chamber's currently available seating.

## LEGISLATIVE MACE

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I will also draw to members' attention that today is a somewhat historic occasion in that we have used the province's original mace. The current mace has been sent out for cleaning and maintenance and will be back with us in a couple of weeks. You will recall that this mace made its journey away in 1812 and was returned by President Roosevelt, so we hope the current mace makes a quicker trip back than that.

## BY-ELECTION IN HALIBURTON-KAWARTHA LAKES- BROCK

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I also beg to inform the House that a vacancy has occurred in the membership of the House by reason of the resignation of Laurie Scott as member of the electoral district of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, effective January 12, 2009. Accordingly, the Speaker has issued his warrant to the Chief Electoral Officer for the issue of a writ for a by-election.

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I'd like to introduce Victoria Barnett, Terrance Luscombe and Charlotte Henderson,

York undergrad students who want contract negotiations, not back-to-work legislation.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I'd like to introduce Sandra Ignagni, Hilary Chan and Yasmine Hassan, members of CUPE Local 3903, Glendon campus picket team; and Tyler Shipley, Punam Khosla, Datejie Green, Lykke de la Cour and Xavier Lafrance, members of the CUPE Local 3903 communications committee at York University, who want to see their collective bargaining rights respected through contract negotiations, not back-to-work legislation.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I remind members that you can mention your visitor's name and that way we'll all get the opportunity to introduce those visitors we'd like to see.

Member for Nipissing-James Bay.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Nipissing? My riding just got a lot bigger, Speaker; that's all I know.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Timmins-James Bay.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Thank you very much, Speaker. I'd like to introduce, from Local 3903 CUPE, the following people: Jamie Smith, Sean Gill, Colette Granger, Colin Lennard-White and Mr. Dang, along with Ashley, who comes from all the way from Kapuskasing, Ontario.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** It gives me pleasure to introduce Lyndon Koopmans in the members' west gallery. He is one of the students instrumental in starting yorknothostage.com and is here today to observe proceedings.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I'd like to introduce Leyna Lowe, Megan Dombrowski, Kim Hutchinson, Jennifer Rinaldi, members of CUPE Local 3903, Chimneystack Road picket team; also Christina Rousseau, Healy Thompson, Sylvia D'Addario, Maria Wallis and Noaman Ali, members of CUPE Local 3903.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I'd like to introduce Megan Shrubsole, Vanessa Lamb, Michael Cook, Jesse Carlson and Carmen Teeple-Hopkins, members of CUPE Local 3903, Shoreham Drive picket team; and as well, Gary Romanuk, Greg Bird, Ben Nelson, Gabrielle Gerin, Andrea Kneeland and Sara Hornstein, members of the CUPE Local 3903 strike committee at York University.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Introduction of guests? The member for—

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Toronto-Danforth.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** It's been a long break.



**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Mr. Speaker, I recognize that. Toronto–Danforth, thank you.

I'd like to introduce Dan Furukawa Marques, Sean Starrs, Kamilla Pietrzyk, Joseph Baines, Stephanie David, Aidan Conway and Mary Thibodeau, members of CUPE Local 3903, Sentinel Road picket team; and Gaëlle Vercollier, Bob Hanke and Véronique Tomaszewski Ramses, also members of CUPE Local 3903.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I'd like to introduce Fred Ho, Raj Virk and Mohan Mishra, staff members of CUPE Local 3903; and Graham Potts, Amrit Heer, Sharon Davidson, Mary Anne Coffey, Jesse Ovidia, Parbattie Ramsarran and Jason Harman, members of the CUPE Local 3903 bargaining team at York University, who want to see their collective bargaining rights respected through contract negotiations, not back-to-work legislation.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I'd like to introduce Parastou Saberi, Duncan Clegg, Jason Demers and Mike Yam, members of CUPE Local 3903, northwest gate picket team; and Alex Levant, Dhruv Jain, Ian Hussey and Jordy Cummings, members of the CUPE Local 3903 green caucus at York University.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I'd like to introduce—and they will all be joining us, by the way, as we commence—Alex Wilson, Kevin McCain and Joshua Synenko, members of the CUPE Local 3903 Pond Road picket team at York University; and Janice Folk-Dawson and Dan Crow of the Ontario university coordinating committee; also my husband, Gil Gaspar, who is a contract labourer and teacher at Humber, who all want to see collective bargaining rights respected through contract negotiations, not back-to-work legislation.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I would like to introduce Cameron Holmstrom, who's here in support of the CUPE workers.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'm pleased to rise today. I want to, first of all, say that I'm actually happy to be back here. This morning I attended a Manulife Walk for Memories fundraiser up at Mountainview Mall in Midland. I mentioned at the beginning of my opening remarks that I'd have to leave after half an hour and come back to Queen's Park because we were introducing back-to-work legislation. I've got to tell you that I got a large round of applause because we are back here. I can tell you that I wish we could have been back here as early as January 4 or 5, because I think we have dithered on this quite severely.

There are 50,000 young people out of school. I've had a number of my constituents, by phone calls, by e-mails, by letters, demanding that we get back as soon as possible. Their lives are at stake here. There are a lot of

hard-working Ontario families who are putting their children through university and they demand that we be here and act in a responsible and leadership manner.

1310

I, for one, am very proud to be back here today, and I hope we can get this ironed out today, not drag this thing out for three or four weeks. Let's get this done today and get these kids back to work so they can contribute as taxpayers to the province of Ontario.

### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I make this statement on behalf of New Democrats here at Queen's Park. This is a truly regrettable move that the McGuinty government is taking. York's striking workers perform 54% of the teaching at that school yet only receive 7.5% of the university's entire annual budget in salary and benefits. They also have little, if any, job security.

Where's the fairness when senior university administrators make almost half a million dollars in salary, benefits and perks alone? These workers, many of them students themselves, are demanding fairness; that's all. They're prepared to negotiate a fair collective bargaining agreement at the negotiating table, and that's where you develop fairly resolved conflicts—at the bargaining table. Yet the administration of York University has abandoned the bargaining table and relies, rather, upon what could well be stellar in the illegality of back-to-work legislation, in the view of recent jurisprudence.

The root cause is the chronic underfunding of Ontario's universities. There's a real prospect of labour disputes at other universities and colleges with this chronic underfunding. Mr. McGuinty appears to be prepared to simply legislate people back to work rather than accept his responsibility to adequately fund. Ontario is 10 out 10; nothing to be proud of.

New Democrats will not support Mr. McGuinty this afternoon.

### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I am here today to support York University students going back to school, and the efforts of Peter Shurman, Conservative MPP for Thornhill, who worked so hard on this.

But my statement today is about the 47-day OC Transpo strike that has paralyzed Ottawa. Every resident of my city has been affected. Calls for help for ODSP and Ontario Works recipients and the working poor have increased dramatically at my constituency office. My constituents are telling me that they've had to choose between gas, medicine and food. Patients are missing medical appointments and churches have cancelled worship services. About 500 students in our city had to quit school at Algonquin College in the last month because they can't get to class. The city has increased emergency social funding by \$700,000 from their tight budget. In fact, the total economic impact on my city has been over \$280 million and thousands of jobs.



There's no end in sight for this life-altering strike, so I think the time has come for the McGuinty Liberals to step up to the plate and offer social service emergency funding for the people in my city. The Liberals need to inject one-time emergency strike assistance to the city of Ottawa to help them out. This would enable community organizations like NROC to continue their strike taxi-chit program. It would help people like Anna Kraisingerova, who has to walk 12 hours a day back and forth to work. It would help the working poor, who have had to choose between putting gas in their car and putting food on their table.

### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I rise in this House today partly because I'm just happy to rise in this House today and see my government colleagues sitting there across.

My involvement in the strike at York University dates back to November 18—I remember the day very well. I went out just to take a look around and find out what was going on. There was a rally of a newly formed group called York Not Hostage and some wonderful young people saying, "You know what? We don't want to take sides. We just want to go back to class. We don't want a repeat of what happened back in 2001." The feeling was quite palpable to me: This was going to go nowhere. So I began a campaign in this House to bring us to this day.

This may be contested by some, but it was not politics that motivated me at all. It was the fact that I was being besieged in my riding of Thornhill, which borders on York University and which is home to thousands of students, professors, teaching assistants and the like. I did what MPPs are elected to do.

I knew that this was not going to be an easy victory for either side, but now we are here. To me, it is extremely important that we address the concerns of the broader community and put these young people back into class, I hope with the concurrence of my colleagues from the NDP.

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### YORK UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTES RESOLUTION ACT, 2009

#### LOI DE 2009 SUR LE RÈGLEMENT DES CONFLITS DE TRAVAIL À L'UNIVERSITÉ YORK

Mr. Fonseca moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 145, An Act to resolve labour disputes between York University and Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 3903 / Projet de loi 145, Loi visant à régler les conflits de travail entre l'Université York et la section locale 3903 du Syndicat canadien de la fonction publique.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

We will call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1316 to 1321.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** All those in favour, please stand one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Duncan, Dwight	Munro, Julia
Albanese, Laura	Dunlop, Garfield	Murdoch, Bill
Arnott, Ted	Elliott, Christine	Naqvi, Yasir
Bailey, Robert	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Balkissoon, Bas	Fonseca, Peter	Pendergast, Leeanna
Bartolucci, Rick	Hoy, Pat	Phillips, Gerry
Bentley, Christopher	Jaczek, Helena	Pupatello, Sandra
Best, Margaret	Jeffrey, Linda	Ramal, Khalil
Bradley, James J.	Jones, Sylvia	Rinaldi, Lou
Broten, Laurel C.	Kular, Kuldip	Ruprecht, Tony
Brown, Michael A.	Kwinter, Monte	Savoline, Joyce
Brownell, Jim	Levac, Dave	Shurman, Peter
Bryant, Michael	MacLeod, Lisa	Smitherman, George
Caplan, David	Mangat, Amrit	Sousa, Charles
Carroll, Aileen	Martiniuk, Gerry	Takhar, Harinder S.
Chan, Michael	Mauro, Bill	Van Bommel, Maria
Craiton, Kim	McGuinty, Dalton	Wilkinson, John
Delaney, Bob	McMeekin, Ted	Wilson, Jim
Dhillon, Vic	McNeely, Phil	Witmer, Elizabeth
Dickson, Joe	Meilleur, Madeleine	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dombrowsky, Leona	Milloy, John	Zimmer, David
Duguid, Brad	Moridi, Reza	

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** All those opposed, please stand one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Horwath, Andrea	Prue, Michael
DiNovo, Cheri	Kormos, Peter	Tabuns, Peter
Hampton, Howard	Miller, Paul	

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 65; the nays are 8.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I declare the motion carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

### ORDER OF BUSINESS

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** Mr. Speaker, I'm seeking unanimous consent that the House immediately proceed to introduction of bills for the purpose of introducing one bill, following which the Speaker will call orders of the day.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** We've had introduction of bills, just to clarify it, but you want to move to—

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** I'd be happy to read it again, Speaker—that we proceed to introduction of bills for the purpose of introducing one bill, following which you call orders of the day, and that, notwithstanding standing order 71(a), the order for second reading of Bill 145, An Act to resolve labour disputes between York University and Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 3903, may now be called.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Do you understand the motion? The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to move a motion without notice.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I heard a no.

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** There being no agreement at this time with respect to orders of the day, I would—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** You understand—

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** Yes.

## PETITIONS

### MOTORCYCLE SAFETY

**Mr. Bill Murdoch:** If we're allowed to have a petition, I have a petition to present today. It's to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Bill 117," presented October 27 for first reading, "An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to prohibit the driving and operation of motorcycles with child passengers...;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That Bill 117 be removed from the agenda and never become law."

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: We have no agreement to proceed with this bill, so I move adjournment of the House.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Mr. Bryant has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until 10:30 of the clock, January 26.

*The House adjourned at 1327.*



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Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
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Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
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<b>Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
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Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
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Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
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Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
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## CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Sunday 25 January 2009 / Dimanche 25 janvier 2009

### Access to public gallery

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier) ..... 4685

### Legislative mace

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier) ..... 4685

### By-election in Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier) ..... 4685

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Peter Kormos ..... 4685

Ms. Cheri DiNovo ..... 4685

Mr. Gilles Bisson ..... 4685

Mr. Peter Shurman ..... 4685

Mr. Paul Miller ..... 4685

Mr. Michael Prue ..... 4685

Mr. Peter Tabuns ..... 4686

Ms. Andrea Horwath ..... 4686

Mr. Michael Prue ..... 4686

Ms. Cheri DiNovo ..... 4686

Mr. Gilles Bisson ..... 4686

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

### University labour dispute

Mr. Garfield Dunlop ..... 4686

### University labour dispute

Mr. Peter Kormos ..... 4686

### Public transit

Ms. Lisa MacLeod ..... 4686

### University labour dispute

Mr. Peter Shurman ..... 4687

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI

York University Labour Disputes Resolution Act,  
2009, Bill 145, Mr. Fonseca / Loi de 2009 sur le  
règlement des conflits de travail à l'Université  
York, projet de loi 145, M. Fonseca

First reading agreed to ..... 4687

### Order of business

Hon. Michael Bryant ..... 4687

## PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

### Motorcycle safety

Mr. Bill Murdoch ..... 4688



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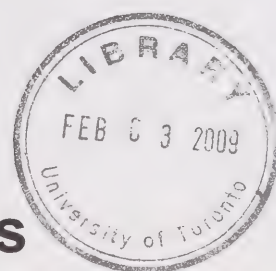
First Session, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 39<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)



Monday 26 January 2009

Lundi 26 janvier 2009

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 26 January 2009

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 26 janvier 2009

*The House met at 1030.*

*Prayers.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** We will pause for a moment of inner thought and personal reflection.

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I would like to recognize some visitors in the west members' gallery from [yorknothostage.com](http://yorknothostage.com): Malcolm Morum; Nora Kharouba; Tina Temoche; Peter Temoche; Cindy Valdes; one of the original organizers of the group, Catherine Divaris; Matthew Geigen-Miller; and Christina Chewchuk. Welcome to the Legislature.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I'd like to introduce my husband, who's a contract faculty teacher, Gil Gaspar.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Minister, we are here today because you and your government have failed to put the students of York University first. In November when the strike started, the parties had already been negotiating for months and a mediator had already declared a virtual deadlock. Both parties knew it; the students knew it; their parents knew it; we knew it. How could you not have known it? The time to "bang heads together," in the Premier's words, was back in November. Why didn't you send in a top mediator then?

**Hon. John Milloy:** I appreciate the honourable member's question. Like all members in this House, we're concerned about the situation at York, but we also respect collective bargaining. Our government took every action to allow the collective bargaining process to proceed, including a vote that was held a week ago as well as the assistance of a mediator, and finally a top mediator who went in in the last few days. When it became apparent that there was a deadlock, we took the action of recalling the Legislature.

We call on all members of the Legislature, particularly those in the New Democratic Party, to not hold up the education of 50,000-plus students.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Minister, your useless excuses do not get students back into class and will not save their academic careers.

I told you back in November that you weren't doing enough to save their education. On December 2, I introduced a bill to get you to pass back-to-work legislation by December 11. If you had done that, we would not be here today and the students would have been back in class three weeks ago at the latest. Why didn't you act to pass my bill? Why didn't you put students first? Did you figure that they hadn't suffered enough by that point?

**Hon. John Milloy:** You can't have it both ways.

We believe in the collective bargaining system. Having both parties at the table to negotiate an agreement is the best way forward. We allowed the collective bargaining system to proceed until we were informed Saturday morning that there was a deadlock and we took immediate action to recall the House.

We are as anxious as the members across the way to see 50,000-plus students back in the classroom, and we call on all members, particularly those in the New Democratic Party, to stop blocking access of those students to post-secondary education.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** You don't know the meaning of the word "immediate." You hid behind excuses of university independence and autonomy. All the while you forgot that the students are dependent on the university for their future and that the students are dependent on you to protect them from becoming the victims of labour disputes. This one had broken down months ago. Your mismanagement took them from being pawns of the university and the union to being pawns of the Liberals and the NDP. For that shameful political posturing, the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities should resign. When can we expect your resignation?

**Hon. John Milloy:** The honourable member does not have a monopoly on concern for university and college students in this province. I'm very proud to be part of a government which has made post-secondary education one of the cornerstones of our mandate, having to clean up the mess that was left by that government when they were in power. How dare he, as part of a party that slashed funding to universities, cut student aid and allowed tuition to balloon, stand here today and claim that he's talking on behalf of students?

We allowed the collective bargaining process to run its course, which is the proper role of a government. We

have reached an impasse, and we call on all members of the Legislature, particularly the New Democratic Party, to make sure that York students can get back to the classroom as quickly as possible.

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** My question is also to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. I would say to the minister: Look into the galleries. You'll see there are a number of students there. These are the same students who have been held hostage for the last 12 weeks. They want to know why you allowed that to happen, and they're here today because they want some answers. They want to know if you will compensate them for what the strike has cost them and why, as the Premier suggested, they should take on even more student debt because of your incompetence. Will you answer that for them, Minister?

**Hon. John Milloy:** Our concern has always been for the students. We call on all members of the Legislature, particularly the New Democratic Party, whom I hear heckling, to move forward to allow students to return to the classroom as soon as possible.

We have a system, the Ontario student assistance program, which offers support to students through a variety of loan and grant programs. We have committed—and in fact, we are working very closely with York University to allow the OSAP program to be extended to those students if and when the school year is officially extended at York University. Our officials were working with York University yesterday, on Sunday, and continue to work with them to allow students to have access to additional assistance.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Minister, the fiasco that you've created at York University is also very bad news for some 300,000 other students at the rest of Ontario's universities. At least 10 Ontario universities will be negotiating new contracts with their faculty before the end of this year. If you mess those talks up like you did at York, Ontario will be faced with massive province-wide strikes. Again, only the students will suffer, and they too will be looking for compensation from this government. So I ask: Will this government commit today to stepping into those contract negotiations before they end up in protracted strikes, just like what happened at York University?

**Hon. John Milloy:** Over here, we have respect for the collective bargaining process. We allowed the collective bargaining process to proceed until a deadlock took place.

I find it strange that a member who was part of a government which watched a strike go on at York University for 75 days and did not recall the Legislature would stand up and give me lessons about how we should manage these situations.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** I say to the minister: You messed up. You should have acted before Christmas. You should have followed the advice of our colleague from Thornhill.

You know that what's really behind the strike at York is the fact that CUPE wants to ensure that the contracts of all universities that are under their belt will all come up at the same time so they can put on one massive, province-wide strike in the middle of next year. What are you going to do now to make sure that that doesn't happen? If you don't do that, the young people will suffer again. You're forewarned; you know it's going to happen. So we are asking you, as a matter of common sense, to at least stagger the contracts, put timelines on when strikes do happen. Do something so we don't have a massive province-wide strike. Either that—resign, because you're completely frigging incompetent.

1040

**Hon. John Milloy:** I appreciate the honourable member's dramatics, but as I say, 75 days a strike went on at York University under his watch and they failed to bring back the Legislature.

We believe in the collective bargaining process. One of the unfortunate by-products is that strikes and lockouts occasionally happen. It's one of the strengths of the system. It also, at times, can be an unfortunate by-product, as I say. We allowed the process to continue on at York University. We recalled the Legislature on a Sunday afternoon as soon as we heard word of a deadlock. And we call on all members, particularly those in the New Democratic Party, to remove the obstacle so that we can bring 50,000-plus students back to the classroom as soon as possible.

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** My question is to the Deputy Premier. York University's CUPE Local 3903 reduced its contract demands to just four items. The local had accepted York's salary proposal, and most of the major benefits articles had been agreed to. The local was prepared to negotiate on the two remaining issues. With a negotiated settlement so close, why is the McGuinty government resorting to back-to-work legislation?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** I want to say to the honourable member that today is a day where the questions are to be put to him and to his party. Today, the honourable member stands in this Legislature and he speaks about the workers. But we note that in his question, there was not one reference to the 50,000 students and to their families who have been impacted through this very long period.

We believe in collective bargaining; otherwise, there's no explanation for the amount of time that was on offer to allow these two sides to come together in a fashion that got the job done for the students. We say to today's NDP: Will they take action today to get these students



back into the classroom, to allow other means of arbitration etc., to take hold in a way that gets this issue resolved? Will they act today in a decisive fashion on behalf of the students?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** The McGuinty government claims to care about university students—the McGuinty government that is 10th out of all the provinces in Canada in terms of funding university education. But the government's own head mediator, Reg Pearson, made it clear last week that the York administration had no intention of bargaining and were just waiting for legislation. I want to quote him: "Everything that I've seen has been not quite there, and quite frankly they're"—meaning York University administration—"not prepared to move out of their ballpark. That could be because they're waiting for government to fix the problem."

In view of those statements from Reg Pearson, your own mediator, will the minister admit that this was not a deadlock but the unilateral refusal on the part of York University to negotiate, and as such, the government's actions may be illegal?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** We know that the honourable member, a learned lawyer, wants to fall into matters of legality. But at the heart of the question, for one minute he was unable to answer why he stands today with his party in opposition to getting these students back into the classroom. That is the objective that we must all address. We allowed, for 80 days, the opportunity between these two groups to resolve the matters at hand. In fact, the honourable member raises the issue of funding while in his first question he submitted that there was agreement on the matters of funding.

At the heart of it, we have an opportunity to act in a decisive fashion which places these students, 50,000 of them, and their families, first and foremost, after having allowed due process the opportunity to work. Today we ask today's NDP: Will you resolve to take the decisive actions necessary, in as timely a way as this Legislature allows, to get these students back into the classroom?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I notice once again that the McGuinty government doesn't want to answer the question. If the McGuinty government wanted to do something decisive for students, Ontario wouldn't be 10th out of 10 provinces in terms of funding for university education.

Again, I want to quote the government's own mediator, appointed by the government. This is what he said: "Everything that I've seen has been not quite there, and quite frankly they're"—meaning York University administration—"not prepared to move out of their ballpark. That could be because they're waiting for government to fix the problem."

Here's the reality: The senate of York University cancelled classes. There were 77 days; they agreed to meet on only 11 of those days. For the last week, they refused

to bargain at all. This doesn't sound like deadlock; this sounds like a university that says, "We're not going to bargain because we know the McGuinty government"—

**Hon. George Smitherman:** No, what's happening here today on the floor of the Ontario Legislature is a tactic on the part of the New Democratic Party to stand in the way as the last remaining barrier to getting these students back into the classroom.

The honourable member can make up all of the storylines that he wants, he can find all of the process reasons, but at the heart of the matter, this honourable member cannot, as a matter of principle, tell us why it was possible for them to stand in their place and support back-to-work legislation related to the TTC but they are unprepared to recognize the needs of these students. They're unwilling to recognize the essential nature of education for these 50,000 students.

Since we came to office, York University has received a 52% increase in funding. The agreement that was on offer included income adjustments to the tune of about 4% a year. In the circumstances that we face, most Ontarians looking in—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. New question.

## UNIVERSITY FUNDING

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Again to the Deputy Premier. The McGuinty government would be quite happy to legislate this, quick and dirty, because the McGuinty government doesn't want to have its own sorry record known by the people of Ontario.

Here is the sorry record. Who does the president of the student federation at York refer to as at the heart of this problem? He says, "Who do I blame? I blame Dalton McGuinty for underfunding." Or Jim Coyle in the Toronto Star: "As one professor from another Ontario university put it, the issue for York, and all schools, is underfunding that does not allow the hiring of permanent faculty and the resulting reliance on cheaper contract labour."

My question is this: How much longer is the McGuinty government going to underfund our universities and victimize the students and the workers?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** The honourable member wants to throw all of these things up but doesn't explain his own behaviour.

Over the last five or six years, funding for York University has increased by 52%. In the last election campaign, in the NDP's 2007 platform, they called for increasing post-secondary education funding by \$200 million a year over four years, between 2007 and 2011. We look at the 2008-09 budget increase: In that single budget, our government increased expenditures for the university and college sector by \$400 million.

The honourable member, in his history in this Legislature, does not have a good grasp of numbers—but even more so, we wonder why the honourable member yet again fails to address the question that is before us today.



Will he act in a fashion which for once puts these students first and allows them the opportunity—50,000 strong—to get into the classroom, to resume learning—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I say to the students and I say to the McGuinty government, we'd be happy to compare what we were prepared to invest in our universities with what you have failed to invest in our universities any time.

The minister wants to refer to numbers. Here are the numbers that really count: Ontario is 10th out of 10 provinces in terms of its per capita funding for universities. Ontario has the worst student-faculty ratio in Canada and is amongst the worst in North America. Ontario students experience the largest class sizes, often in the hundreds and the thousands, and now, Ontario students are going to have the highest tuition fees—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. Response.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** The honourable member yet again fails to answer the essential question: Why is today's NDP, which came into the Legislature on the first day's notice and voted back the TTC, unwilling to take action today to allow 50,000-plus students to get back in the classroom? He says he's happy to compare, but then he ducks the issue.

1050

I raise the issue again with the honourable member. Your campaign platform in 2007 suggested a level of increase for the post-secondary sector that our recent budget eclipsed by two to one—dare to compare, Mr. Speaker. The NDP campaigned and said one thing; today they bring another message to the Legislature, and they refuse to answer the question. Why are you standing in the way of the opportunity for 50,000 deeply impacted students, and their families, to get back into the classroom? Why?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** It's not just the figures which tell the story, but here is York's Dean of Arts, Bob Drummond, who confirms that when professors retire, fewer faculty are being hired because of consistent provincial underfunding. So what happens? Professors retire, they're not replaced and the responsibility falls on these contract workers who do more work for less pay.

Again, I say to the McGuinty government: You're not only responsible for what has happened at York, but you're going to be responsible for what happens at other universities. When are you going to stop merely talking about proper funding for our universities and actually start to properly fund our universities in Ontario?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** That's another opportunity on the part of the leader of the New Democratic Party to talk about students, and yet he fails to do so.

We have approximately 100,000 more students in post-secondary education today, and a 52% increase in funding over those years to York University. Compare

that to the record of the honourable member when he sat as a senior member in cabinet. They cut up-front grants to students. They cut student aid by 48%. They increased tuition by 50%.

Today, after more than 80 days of due process, the Legislature comes together. Within its powers, it has the opportunity to act on behalf of students. We repeat the most-asked question in Ontario today: Why does Howard Hampton and today's NDP stand in the way of getting these students at York University back into the classroom? We ask you: Why is it you're doing this to the students of Ontario?

## UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** My question is for the Deputy Premier. It has been 12 weeks that the students have been held hostage by the CUPE strike amid government excuses. This government has had 12 weeks to get back-to-work legislation passed, to negotiate with the House leaders of opposition parties, but you chose to do nothing. Now, while students should be in class moving forward with their education, you are presiding over yet another deadlock that you created by playing political games—and you still are, with the NDP—because we are the only party that has put the interests of the students first.

Deputy Premier, we are prepared to sit here until midnight to get this bill passed. Are you?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** I want to say to the member, who is relatively new to the Legislature, that he has certainly managed to put himself front and centre. But, at the heart of it, we're putting the students front and centre. We think that the matter at hand here is to allow due process, the rule of law as established in the province of Ontario, the collective bargaining process to have all opportunities to resolve matters of labour dispute.

*Interjections.*

**Hon. George Smitherman:** On the one hand, they yell and they heckle that it's not long enough. On this side, they yell and they heckle that we waited too long.

But here in the Legislature today, the matter before us is the opportunity to use the rules of this place to get the students back into the classroom. The politics associated with that are clear. One party stands in the way of that. They are over here, and we encourage them to give way so that the students can get back to learning.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Gee, I thought my question was about sitting until midnight. This isn't about me, and it's not about you. It's about them.

The Premier himself has said that he expected the NDP to oppose this bill. Knowing that, he should have introduced this legislation weeks ago. Because you've screwed up this thing so badly, the strike has now made international news, sending the message to all the world that the post-secondary education of Ontario is not a priority to this government. No wonder we're on the have-not list.



Is the Deputy Premier willing to commit in this Legislature that future labour disruptions of education will not be tolerated and that you will step in each and every time to put students first?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** It's only possible for a new member of that caucus to stand up in this Legislature and talk about post-secondary education and say that for our government it has not been a priority. The sorry record of your party is clear to all.

On the matter, very, very clearly—

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The member for Timmins–James Bay.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** The putative leader of the New Democratic Party should try and work himself onto the question list.

What I would like to say to the honourable member on the matter of sitting until midnight is that if the matter is brought forward for unanimous consent on whether we will sit to midnight, the Liberal Party will say yes, but I doubt that they will.

## EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is to the Minister of Economic Development. Minister, the Legislature was recalled to strip away the collective bargaining rights of York workers. It should have been recalled to deal with job crisis and job losses in our province. Over the past five weeks, 60 jobs at Tembec in Spruce Falls; 200 at Ube Automotive, Sarnia; 40 jobs at Canwest; 61 at Lakeside Steel—the list goes on and on throughout our province, Minister. The list grows by the day, yet this government still, Minister, has no plan. When will we finally see a plan?

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** During the intersession between the end of last year and this year, there have been a number of announcements—I'm sure the member is aware of them—all of them increasing the investments that the government has made through both the Next Generation of Jobs Fund and the advanced manufacturing strategy.

The plan is for the government to jump in to jump-start businesses, to allow them to jump ahead of their global competitors. This government has done that over the past three weeks, increasing the numbers of investments to the tune of almost half a billion dollars that have been leveraged as a result of the McGuinty government's investments directly into businesses, businesses that will be the leaders in the future.

I know that the member would want to stand up and congratulate those businesses which have in fact put together a plan that has allowed them to jump ahead of their competitors in the months and years to come.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I'd like to thank some of the people, but unfortunately there are not a heck of a lot of jobs coming to Hamilton.

Ontarians are looking for bold, aggressive action to sustain and create jobs, but the McGuinty government still has no plan. Here is what Sarnia Mayor Mike Bradley had to say about the government's handling of the job crisis: "There is absolutely no leadership coming out of Queen's Park."

The NDP has a jobs plan. It includes new investments in infrastructure, a MUSH-sector energy retrofit, thousands more affordable housing units and an expanded Buy Ontario program. Our plan will create thousands of jobs while making important social investments. The McGuinty government is welcome to borrow from us. We're more than happy to work together and share. Why won't you do it now?

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** In fact, the investments in Hamilton in particular have been quite significant, not only with respect to the investments directly in the community through the \$400,000 communities in transition fund, but the skills training centre, McMaster Innovation Park, investments through AMIS to Dofasco and so on.

But the question is, why won't this member do it now? I can't imagine a greater impediment to the growth of our economy than to stall the continued education of our finest, of our students. I think about the businesses around York University, the impact on the students, the impact on their careers, and the impact of all this through this particular strike.

If this member wants to stand up and talk about economic development, then he should stop standing in the way of resolving this issue as quickly as possible and putting the students first.

## RENEWABLE ENERGY

**Mr. Pat Hoy:** My question is for the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure. Minister, I'm a strong supporter of adding more clean, green energy to our electricity supply mix. You will know that there are a number of renewable energy products in my riding. In fact, the Premier and I attended the opening of the Kruger Energy Port Alma wind power project in November of last year. This project is a 44-turbine wind farm that will produce enough clean electricity for 30,000 households.

On Friday you made another announcement about the government's commitment to renewable energy by releasing the names of the winning bidders in the Ontario Power Authority's renewable energy supply III procurement. Would the minister tell us how this latest announcement will support job creation and create greener energy?

1100

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Minister of Energy and Infrastructure.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** At the heart of the RES III, the renewable program III announcements that I had the privilege of making on Friday, is the opportunity to green our economy, and at the same time our electricity system, to the benefit of employees and certainly to the benefit of Ontarians who breathe the air. Green energy

ensures a sustainable future. Cleaner, greener power will clean up the air and shrink our carbon footprint.

The projects that have been completed in the member's riding have created more than a thousand direct jobs in many Ontario communities and added benefits by way of municipal tax revenues, the purchase of local products and services, and payments to land owners who have leased their properties to wind farms.

Recently, the OPA has awarded six contracts under the renewable energy supply directive. Once built, these six wind projects will generate enough green power for another 120,000 homes in the province of Ontario. These private sector investments total \$1.3 billion in Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Pat Hoy:** I'm very excited that these three new wind farms will be located in my riding of Chatham-Kent-Essex. This latest announcement will see a new 101-megawatt Kruger Energy wind farm, a 99-megawatt Renewable Energy Systems wind farm and a 78-megawatt energy wind farm.

I have seen first-hand how wind projects help support our local economies, from jobs to build the wind farms to local farmers leasing their land. These benefits are essential to our rural communities. Would the minister tell the House how this latest announcement will benefit my local community and the many communities across this province?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Minister?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** We see the opportunity for continued investments in green energy to deliver those important carbon benefits and to deliver very, very important economic benefits as well. The six new wind power projects, three in Chatham-Kent and one in each of Essex, Prince Edward county and Thunder Bay, total more than 492 megawatts, and as I said, enough power for about 120,000 homes.

On the job front, 716 jobs will be created in Chatham-Kent and Essex, 308 jobs expected in northwestern Ontario and 108 jobs related to this in southeastern Ontario. In addition, about \$3 million a year in annual lease payments will be paid to land owners who will host turbines. I met several of those land owners on Friday who are very, very enthusiastic. Municipalities will benefit from at least an additional \$1 million in property tax assessments. Our government is going to continue to vigorously look for opportunities to apply even more green energy going forward.

## ELEMENTARY TEACHERS

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** These are uncertain economic times, Minister, for the people of Ontario, and families are unsure of what the future holds. Their uncertainty is compounded by the lack of leadership, the inaction and the ineptitude of the McGuinty government on so many fronts: the economy, the York strike, the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario negotiations, and I could

go on and on. This government has a track record of ignoring uncomfortable situations that lead to conflict. You ignored our call to end the York strike weeks ago. Minister, can you assure the parents of public elementary students across Ontario that their children will not have to suffer the same interruption that the York students have?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Minister of Education?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Contrary to what the member opposite has said, I'm very proud of this government's record in its relationship with employee groups. To compare with the party opposite's 26 million days of school lost under their regime—there is no comparison. In fact, as of this month there are 394 agreements that are covered by provincial agreements in my sector, in elementary and secondary. Of those 394, 365 agreements have been signed. They are finalized. We have been successful.

I understand that there are some questions about the Elementary Teachers' Federation and their relationship with their boards. There is a process that has to unfold, but because of our positive working relationship with employee groups, I am confident that we will get there.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** Well, the words are fine, but I think the action just isn't there. You and your Premier have promised Ontario families that they will have stability in the education system. Minister, the students of York are unfortunately at your government's mercy and now the elementary students are at risk too. Will you break with your government's pattern of acting too late or will you take action on the ETFO negotiation and call someone in to bang heads together now?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I began working a year ago with the federations and with the boards to come to agreements, which is why of the 23 potential provincial agreements, we have 22 in place. It is laughable that the member opposite is accusing us of not being proactive, of not taking pre-emptive action to make sure that stability is in place for our students. We have five years of labour peace and stability in this province in our elementary and secondary schools. I'm confident that will continue.

The only question in the Legislature today is why the third party will not remove the barrier to get York students back to school.

## NURSES

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. There are already too few workers in our hospitals and more are needed, but the government simply doesn't deliver. Last week, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care admitted that this government's promise to hire 9,000 more nurses has fallen off the agenda for another three or four years. Why did the McGuinty government break its promise to voters



by delaying the hiring of 9,000 nurses until 2012 or 2013, well after the next election?

**Hon. David Caplan:** I don't think this is very much news, because the Minister of Finance, as a result of the economic statement back last fall, rose and shared with this House, and indeed with Ontarians, the fact that we would be in a position of having to lengthen out.

We are still very committed to hiring 9,000 nurses. In fact, I can inform the member today that Ontario has hired over 10,000 nurses into hospitals, into communities and long-term care to help right across the province. It's that kind of effort that is in stark contrast to my friends opposite. The record of the New Democratic Party and Mr. Hampton when he was in government: less nurses. According to the College of Nurses, the number of registered nurses in Ontario fell by 3,000 during the five years that the New Democratic Party was in—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. David Caplan:** In fact, there was a shift from full-time to casual. The percentage of nurses working full time fell 3%—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** This minister should know that empty commitments don't provide health care for people in Ontario. Ontarians across this province see a crisis in our hospitals. Last week in Hamilton, 250 hospital workers were laid off. Niagara, London, Kitchener, Waterloo and others are bracing for similar staff cuts. Pat MacDonald, president of the Ontario Nurses' Association local at Hamilton Health Sciences, said it's an accident waiting to happen.

What is this government's excuse for ignoring the understaffing problems in Ontario's hospitals?

**Hon. David Caplan:** In fact, as I've mentioned, we've seen an increase in the number of nurses—10,000 in the province of Ontario to date—and we're going to continue with that.

But I would note that some of the students who are not in classes because of the NDP are nursing students. If the member opposite truly cared about getting these people back into practice, helping them, this member in particular would ensure that we had quick passage so that those students could be back to work.

What does this member have against nurses? What do the members of her caucus have against them? In fact, in the case of Hamilton Health Sciences, there was a \$117-million increase in base funding, over 23%. That's in addition to \$60 million for the aging-at-home strategy, which is seeing that nurses, personal support workers and registered practical nurses all have an opportunity to practise where previously they did not. The member opposite knows this full well. In fact, she has some explaining to do.

#### RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

**Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis:** My question is to the Minister of Research and Innovation. Minister, in Hamil-

ton—a great community—a fast-growing tech company named C2C Link is quickly establishing itself in the global marketplace. C2C Link is a McMaster University start-up making optical crystal chips that convert laser light from one colour to another. This company's technology can be used in laser displays, biomedical instrumentation, sensing and telecommunications. This is just one example of the many innovative companies and fresh thinking which comes from Hamilton, Ontario.

Could the minister please explain what the Ministry of Research and Innovation is doing to help start-ups such as C2C Link bring their world-leading innovations to market?

1110

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I want to thank my good friend from Hamilton Mountain for the question. I know how very proud she is of the innovation that is happening in the Hamilton area. I had the privilege of being with the Premier and my good colleague Minister Best at Centennial College earlier this month to announce funding for eight companies under the investment accelerator fund. You'll recall that we created the Ideas to Market strategy, some \$160 million, and of that, \$29 million went to IAF. There are eight brilliant companies.

I want to talk about C2C Link. They have made a globally significant breakthrough when it comes to science, and that happened at McMaster University. This young company is already developing prototypes for, first, a whole new brand—a green, efficient television screen, a new monitor that uses laser light. But beyond that, it has the potential to drive something called photonic computers that would accelerate our computers to the speed of light. That is happening in Hamilton. So there are great opportunities in the city of Hamilton, and at McMaster, where the students were at school today.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis:** Hamilton and Ontario have the people, they have the talent and they have the commitment to continue to create leaders in research and innovation like C2C Link. It is clear that this type of investment is fundamental to helping young and innovative companies get off the ground. I know that companies like C2C Link recognize our commitment to their success. As the president of C2C Link stated, "The Ontario government is well-known for its support of high-tech companies. Thanks to this investment from the Ontario government, C2C will be able to develop our prototype, attract customers and create new jobs."

Could the minister outline other innovative companies where the innovation accelerator fund is helping to create Ontario's industries and jobs of the future?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** You know, on this side of the House, our colleagues believe that great jobs come from great ideas.

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, come to order.



**Hon. John Wilkinson:** It is ensuring that we are fostering those great ideas that is the best way in the 21st century to drive the creation of new jobs. So it's important for us to make those investments in these great new start-up companies. C2C Link is just one of the companies that received funding.

I would just like to share with the House some of those companies. One of them is REGEN Energy. I want to thank my friend Dr. Qaadri for bringing this company to our attention. REGEN is at the cutting edge of new green technology that allows us to reduce energy demand. It's a wonderful new marriage of hardware and software with a tremendous global market.

Every one of these companies has to be able to show us that they have a \$20-million global market opportunity and that they're committed to creating jobs right here in Ontario. That's why we're funding C2C—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you.

### MANUFACTURING JOBS

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** A question to the Minister of Economic Development. Minister, since the House rose on December 11, at least another 1,800 well-paying manufacturing jobs have left our province: Navistar in Chatham, 679 jobs; FNX nickel in Sudbury, 307 jobs lost; and Westcast Industries in Wingham, 140 jobs lost, just to name a few. Your high taxes, runaway spending and high hydro rates are chasing over 200,000 well-paying manufacturing jobs out of our province.

Minister, given your dual capacity as the Minister of Economic Development and as House leader, will you support continuing this legislation with a focus on the economy?

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** I do want to say to the member that I appreciate the attention that he has put with respect to the investments that the government has made and the manufacturing investment strategy. The strategy, of course, is to provide assistance either by way of loans or grants to leverage, in the case of the Next Generation of Jobs Fund, greater investments, which in turn produces jobs and more production from the companies and revenue for the taxpayer.

In particular, he cites one job number. I would say that in this program that has been in existence for less than a year, it has itself generated almost 2,000 new jobs as a result of these investments. In fact, in exchange for the \$67 million that has been invested by the province, it has leveraged almost half a billion dollars in investments.

This is a strategy of jump-starting the companies to allow them to jump ahead in the global economy, and we'll continue to do that.

I look forward to his—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Minister, Ontario is being lambasted with increasingly unfortunate economic news of layoffs—even the 1,800 jobs since this session ended

back in December. Minister, we'll deal with the York bill, and then we have the opportunity to continue this session with a focus on the economy.

In light of these job losses, in light of Ontario being dead last in Confederation in growth, Dalton McGuinty is absolutely paralyzed by the economic situation. Premier Campbell has acted to reduce business taxes. Premier Wall in Saskatchewan has reduced taxes on income, as well. In the UK, they brought forward a loan program to help out small businesses. Dalton McGuinty has done nothing.

Minister, you have the opportunity to extend this session of the Legislature and bring forward a new plan, because your tax-and-spend and red tape policies have brought Ontario's economy to its knees.

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** Well, hardly. In fact, even before this crisis unfolded, particularly in the fall, after Lehman Brothers went down, this government already had in place a stimulus package, a robust investment package, and in fact was ahead of the curve in terms of the investments that we were making. We had the programs already in place that many governments are contemplating now. That's why in the member's own region there was a \$10-million investment, through the advanced manufacturing investment strategy loan, to Stanpac. I've seen the member's smiling face at that announcement. It was a great investment at a great company that leveraged more investment and more jobs. There have been investments in the Fort Erie Economic Development and Tourism Corp.; also to the region of Niagara, the Niagara Economic Development Corp.

Contrary to what the member said, the McGuinty government has been ahead of the curve, making those investments, jumping in in order to allow—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you.

### FOREST INDUSTRY

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** My question is to the Deputy Premier, and it's a pretty simple one: Can you tell me if your government has been approached by Abitibi-Bowater about the sale of their power dams or any amendments to their water lease agreements?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** I do want to say to the honourable member that the Minister of Natural Resources has been dealing directly with the company on those matters. I have been in conversation, as have my deputy minister and other leading officials in the government of Ontario, with AbitibiBowater on a number of other matters, including ones related to electricity overall and electricity pricing.

The government takes the approach that the forestry sector is an essential one. It's obviously in a really bad spot on a worldwide basis. We're working very vigorously with a number of programs designed to enhance the efficiency of Ontario-based operations and we're going to continue to do so with as much energy as is necessary to sustain, as much as possible, that sector here in the province of Ontario.



**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I'd like to thank the minister for the answer to that question. He has confirmed in fact that AbitibiBowater has contacted the government. Could you then tell me why the Minister of Natural Resources is denying that's the fact and has said to people in northern Ontario that she has not been contacted and neither has her government?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** The honourable member will want to read back the answer that I gave. I can speak much more precisely about the things that I was involved in related to AbitibiBowater on issues of energy pricing.

Abitibi sent us a letter very recently asking us to implement a program called Demand Response 2. Demand Response 2 is a mechanism by which, if Abitibi shifts its production and therefore its electricity use to lower-demand periods of time, a substantial reduction in the energy price overall can be felt. We've responded by implementing that program, and we've indicated to the company that we will continue to work with them, point by point by point, to do all that we can to make their operations here in the province of Ontario more efficient to sustain that labour force, something that I know all members in the Legislature agree is very, very important.

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Dave Levac:** My question is for the Minister of Education.

Parents in my riding understand the value of reading, especially starting at a young age. As a former educator, I know from first-hand experience that in order for students to do well in school, those students need a strong foundation in reading and writing.

My constituents know that in order for students to develop a love of reading and to become successful in school, they need preschool support and they must have access to quality books.

Minister, can you tell us, please, what you are doing to ensure that there are appropriate resources in our elementary school libraries, which are underbooked at this time?

1120

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'd like to thank the member for Brant for his question, but also for his years of service to education in this province.

Last week we confirmed a \$15-million investment for library books in Ontario's publicly funded elementary schools, and for the first time ever we're using a bulk purchasing of library books. By doing that, we're securing significant discounts in price, ranging from 5% to 50%, which is very significant. What it means is that we're going to be able to make a double investment: We're going to be able to buy more books and to support Ontario's book vendors, which is absolutely essential to stimulating that part of the economy. This investment will provide a minimum of \$1,500 for every elementary school in the province, with a typical school of 300 students receiving over \$3,000.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Response?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Through this initiative—what it means is that Ontario's elementary schools will have 750,000 books that will inspire and encourage kids to read for years to come—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Dave Levac:** That amount of money quoted will go a long way in an elementary school—witness the underbooking that I was talking about—and I know that having well-stocked libraries is important to student access, but it's only one part of the equation. I know that parental involvement also plays an even larger role in developing young minds. I note that tomorrow is Family Literacy Day and I know that events are being set up to mark this event all over the province and especially in my riding. Unfortunately, I missed the Sunday kick-off. Established by the ABC CANADA Literacy Foundation, Family Literacy Day promotes the importance of reading and learning together as a family. In Brant we have the Family Literacy Committee, the public libraries, Kids Can Fly, Launch Pads, early years centres and other school boards working as partners to support reading and learning together. In keeping with this important event tomorrow, Minister, can you share with us what parents and guardians can do to instill the love of reading with their children?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Without a doubt, the most important thing that parents, guardians and family members can do is to read with the children in their lives. To spend time reading, whether it's in the morning or before bed, whenever you have that opportunity, to read with the children in your life is the most important thing you can do. What we're trying to do as a government is to put in place opportunities for families to connect with schools. The parenting and family literacy centres that we've set up—123 across the province—mean that families can come into the school, can have an opportunity to work with professionals in the school but can have opportunities to borrow resources, can help little kids, before they're ready for school, to start to learn the routines of school—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Response?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** —start to learn the value of reading. That means that families then take that knowledge home.

So we encourage, as a government—I hope all members will take part in family literacy activities and that, in every community, parents—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. New question? The member for Ottawa—Orléans—no. Nepean—Carleton.

#### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Mr. McNeely's happy I'm not in Ottawa—Orléans, I'm sure.



My question is to the Deputy Premier. Is the Premier going to respond to my request yesterday to help those who are suffering as a result of the 48-day-old OC Transpo strike by offering one-time emergency social service funding to the city of Ottawa so they can expand or sustain existing provincial programs as a result of the humanitarian consequences of this strike?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** To the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

**Hon. Jim Watson:** I thank the honourable member for her question and her concern. There is no question in my mind or, I believe, in her mind, that the strike is hurting an awful lot of people—the entire city—whether you're a young person, a student, family members, workers, the disabled, the most vulnerable in our community. The local social services agencies in Ottawa do have the authority to provide emergency assistance to those individuals who are facing an extreme financial crisis as a result of this prolonged bus strike. We are providing, as a province, 80% of the funding for social services, and we hope that those individuals who do need that help are approaching the local social services office in the city of Ottawa to seek that financial assistance. So I thank the member for the question, and the province is there as a result of paying 80% of the costs.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Unfortunately, it's not enough right now. The city of Ottawa has had to invest over \$700,000 of its budget as a result of this strike.

*Interjections.*

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I understand that the Liberals would like to heckle me. But the member from next door to my riding understands that we're getting people from ODSP, we're getting people from Ontario Works and we're getting people who are the working poor, the poorest of the poor in our city who are being affected by this strike—and I hear them. They want to blame the federal government; they want to blame the municipal government. But this isn't about blame; it's not about jurisdiction. It's about helping people who are well within our mandate as provincial legislators to look after the existing provincial programs that we have to offer. So I'm asking again: Will the Premier call the mayor of Ottawa today and offer one-time emergency funding for the rising cost of social services as a result of this strike?

**Hon. Jim Watson:** The fact of the matter is that this matter, if it's going to be resolved by legislation, has to be done at the federal level. It's the federal government that has that responsibility. I would encourage all members of this House to contact the federal transport minister, Mr. Baird, and encourage Mr. Baird and the labour minister, Rona Ambrose, to take the appropriate action.

I'd also call on the two parties, the ATU and the city of Ottawa, who I understand are back in informal negotiations, to continue negotiating until you get a deal, because this strike is hurting the retail sector; it's hurting the most vulnerable; it's hurting far too many people. The city claims that it is saving \$3 million a week on this

strike. So I'd encourage them, if they need additional funds for social assistance, to take it from those savings. We also provided \$77 million in one-time funding to the city of Ottawa. They're more than able to take that—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you.

## SKILLS TRAINING

**Mr. Michael Prue:** My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Ten months after its launch, it's time to admit that the government's Second Career retraining program has failed. The proof is that after spending more than \$5 million in advertising and retooling costs, the government has only 4,000 registrants in the entire program. As the employment rate continues to skyrocket under the McGuinty government, this amounts to a disaster. Will the minister stand here today and finally come clean and admit what Ontarians from one end of this province already know, that the Second Career program is an abysmal failure?

**Hon. John Milloy:** I will do no such thing. The fact of the matter is, in last March's budget we announced a new program to add to the suite of programs available for Second Career. We announced 20,000 spots over three years. We are six months into the program and we already have 4,000 people who have come forward to it. I know that the honourable member would in no way want to leave the impression that Second Career is the only program available for laid-off workers, so let me share some statistics with him.

Let's talk about short-term training: Last year 12,000 people enrolled for short-term training. Let's talk about the rapid re-employment and training service: 53,000 workers were assisted last year. Let's talk about the 1,203 job creation partnerships that were launched in the last year.

Through Employment Ontario we have a variety of services that are available to laid-off workers. Second Career is one—an important one, but only one of many.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** My question was about Second Career, and I'd like to ask about it again. The heart of the problem with Second Career is that there is simply too much red tape. After filling out endless forms and going to countless meetings, the ministry is denying approval to many applicants because they don't have enough employers testifying that they won't be hired in their former positions.

Why does the minister refuse to admit that Second Career is badly designed and that it's the wrong program at the wrong time? Will this government admit that it has no comprehensive economic plan and no idea how to deal with the devastation facing Ontario's economy and those who find themselves unemployed?

**Hon. John Milloy:** As I said, we committed to 20,000 long-term training programs over three years, and we are on track to meet that. I have continually made the com-



mitment that as the program moves forward, if we find obstacles, we will remove them, and we are constantly reviewing the program. But this program is about individuals, not statistics. Let me share some stories with the honourable member.

Veronica is 32 years old and was laid off from her job as an office administrator at a software developing company. The application process for Second Career confirmed that there were good prospects in her chosen field as a career counsellor. She started work at George Brown in the career, work and counselling program. Let me quote what Veronica said: "Without the financial support, I would not have been able to go back to school. Through the application process, I learned about my own strengths and interests, and now know exactly what I want to do."

Veronica is not a failure, and neither are the 3,999 other people who have come forward for this program—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you.

### HOSPITAL SERVICES

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, I know that the McGuinty government has made tremendous progress in reducing wait times across the province. However, I continue to hear from my constituents in Ottawa Centre about wait times in our nation's capital. My constituents were disappointed to learn back in June that Dr. Alan Hudson, the man charged with reducing wait times for essential health services in Ontario, told the Champlain Local Health Integration Network that wait times in the Ottawa area were "the worst ... in the province." He said that while wait times had decreased in other areas of the province, the Champlain LHIN had failed to keep up. Dr. Hudson told the LHIN, "You need to sort it out quite quickly."

Since it has been over seven months since Dr. Hudson made this statement, my constituents in Ottawa would like to know, Minister: Has the LHIN made any improvements? Are Ottawa residents seeing shorter wait times for key surgeries?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Minister of Health and Long-Term care.

**Hon. David Caplan:** I'd like to thank the member for Ottawa Centre for the question and for his advocacy on behalf of Ontario patients. I'm pleased to tell him that, since June, the Champlain LHIN and area hospitals have steadily lowered wait times for cataract surgery, cancer surgery and joint replacement. In some cases, the improvements are very dramatic. Since June, 90% of patients in the Champlain LHIN have seen hip surgery wait times drop by 19%. That's a reduction of 66 days. Cancer surgery wait times are down by more than 16%; wait times for cataract surgery have declined by 44 days, or nearly 22%; and the waiting period for knee surgery has dropped by 85 days, more than 24%—all this in just over six months.

**Hon. David Caplan:** I'm pleased to tell the House that the Ottawa area wait times are moving closer to the provincial average. I want to thank the Champlain LHIN and local hospitals for their hard work and I want to encourage them to continue lowering wait times in the—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you, Minister.

Deferred votes: There are none.

This House will recess until 1 of the clock.

*The House recessed from 1133 to 1300.*

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Yesterday, Sunday afternoon, I was in this House to vote for Bill 145, An Act to resolve labour disputes between York University and Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 3903. I was in this House to support immediate passage of this legislation, to stand with the many hundreds of students from Wellington-Halton Hills enrolled at York University. Their education has been interrupted and their futures put on hold because of a strike that has gone on for 80 days.

It was disappointing that the New Democrats refused to give their consent for swift passage of Bill 145—disappointing, but not entirely surprising, because they want to be seen as supporting their union constituency and because they're in the midst of a leadership contest. But let's remember who is ultimately accountable for this mess: It is this do-nothing government, which waited far too long to step in to allow the students back into their labs and lecture halls.

It is characteristic of this government. Too often, this government has ignored real problems, hoping they would simply go away. This lack of effective and principled leadership has made Ontarians worse off. They should have listened to the MPP for Thornhill, the MPP for Simcoe-Grey, the rest of the PC caucus—to all of us who called before Christmas for legislation to put an end to this strike.

Students want to be learning. It's a shame that this government still hasn't learned.

#### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** We're now in the 47th day of the transit strike in the city of Ottawa. The continuation of this dispute and the resulting disruption for public transit users and commuters is causing serious concerns in my community. E-mails, phone calls and letters from my constituents keep pouring in every day, each of them asking for an end to the transit strike so they can live their lives without these unnecessary burdens and disruptions. Ottawa's most vulnerable residents cannot get to work and no longer have access to their doctors, grocers, churches or even schools, colleges and univer-



sities. Storefront businesses and malls have suffered devastating losses during the Christmas period.

Ottawa-Orléans has one of the highest public transit riderships of all ridings in the city of Ottawa. This strike is causing severe congestion on our roads in my community and across the entire city. A drive from my riding to the train station takes 15 minutes, but with the strike it now takes over an hour. Car accidents have drastically increased.

Residents across Ottawa are suffering in a cold winter, and this is unacceptable. The economic hardships and damages this strike is causing have gone on too long. I call on the Amalgamated Transit Union and the city of Ottawa to put their differences aside and come together for the betterment of all residents of Ottawa, and particularly for those who have put their faith in public transportation for so long.

Our city is in a state of urgency, and it's high time the federal government did more to end it. Transportation Minister John Baird should act. I implore them to see the severity of the situation and intervene on behalf of the tens of thousands of public transit users in the city to end this dispute.

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** For 80 long days, this Liberal government and the self-styled education Premier refused to do anything to bring an end to the strike at Canada's third-largest university, resulting in the longest university strike in Canadian history. Because of the inaction of this government, the education of 50,000 York University students and their school year were put under threat of being entirely wiped out because of the education Premier's refusal to step in and help out until the 11th hour.

These students have lived in fear as they've watched their financial resources dwindle and employment opportunities disappear, while education and graduation plans teetered on the brink of destruction. Students are suffering because the Liberals refused to put an end to the strike when the PC caucus was calling for that back in November. Now, after a 12-week-long strike, all that this government has to offer students is a promise of additional OSAP loans, a promise of more student debt.

Students are facing an extra month of rent, less time for summer jobs and less instructional time for the tuition that they paid for. John Tory and the Progressive Conservative Party believe that the students of York University should be supported by their government through some form of financial compensation; it's only fair. It's high time that the McGuinty Liberals find a real solution to help students who've been adversely affected by the incompetence of their government and the horrible inaction of their government.

#### CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** As everyone in this House knows, the York University dispute has come to a head and we'll

be debating that this afternoon, but out there another issue is brewing. Our correctional facilities have been badly overcrowded for a generation—an issue that has never been tackled successfully. The Auditor General recognized this in his last and previous reports. Correctional officers and other occupations in jails are exposed to all manner of inmate sickness and already have high-stress jobs; they get sick. The government has the opportunity now to negotiate a reasonable resolve to this at the bargaining table in a way that effectively addresses the problem of absenteeism.

OPSEU bargaining teams have reached an unprecedented agreement with the government for 45,000 public employees at the central OPS table. The government should be willing to use that reserve of goodwill to achieve a win-win with the corrections bargaining unit by dropping its intransigence on this issue. It's time to obtain a fair deal with those who help keep our community safe and not put them through the agony of what this government has done to York University.

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I would like to share with this House the sentiments of numerous students, their families and local residents of the riding of York South-Weston who have called, e-mailed, written and spoken to me about the record-breaking strike at York University.

After more than 80 days, the students fear that their academic year will be in jeopardy. Many of them count on summer jobs to sustain their university expenses and are worried about how, if the strike is allowed to continue, this will affect their plans for the summer and their future in general. Students who are in their final year worry about whether they will be able to apply for law school or other postgraduate programs. Many of their families are enduring sacrifices to help their children achieve a post-secondary education by contributing to the expenses. These parents have expressed to me vivid frustration with the situation.

I have the utmost respect for workers' rights, rights that so many people in this country have fought so hard to gain. The bargaining process has been respected, but the two sides have reached a deadlock. It is time for all parties in this Legislature to support this legislation so we can get York students back into class.

The future of about 50,000 students is at stake. In the context of the difficult economic times we are facing, their chances to effectively compete in the workforce will be compromised and consequently reduced. It is the right time to intervene.

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I rise in the House today to talk about the York University strike. I received a letter from a constituent who is a parent of a first-year student at York University. She writes: "I am a working-class mother of a first-year student who goes to York



University.... My daughter has struggled to even get used to being away from home and settle in there, and now is going to lose her semester, and" maybe "even her year, with no offer of any funds back to the students or parents. We work very hard for these dollars to send our children to post-secondary education facilities."

She's right: Parents and students work hard to afford post-secondary education. The McGuinty government had the opportunity months ago to end the strike and get students back to class. Not only did they deprive the students of an education but they may have even forced students and parents to pay for the government's lack of action.

Premier McGuinty said that the students who were financially disadvantaged by the strike would have their OSAP extended to help pay additional living and tuition costs, but some students do not qualify for OSAP in the first place, and so their parents scrape by to help pay tuition, and they simply cannot afford to dish out any more. Students who do qualify for OSAP would have to pay even more for their education, not to mention the additional interest they will incur through absolutely no fault of their own.

By delaying bringing an end to this strike, the McGuinty government has robbed hard-working Ontarians. This self-proclaimed education Premier certainly isn't living up to the image he has painted for himself.

1310

## PETITIONS

### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the strike by CUPE Local 3903 at York University has resulted in classes being cancelled, affecting more than 50,000 students across the greater Toronto area; and

"Whereas the members of CUPE Local 3903 show an unwillingness to bargain in good faith and bring an end to this strike; and

"Whereas York University has offered to resolve this labour dispute through binding arbitration;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Enact back-to-work legislation requiring the termination of any strike or lockout action and requiring this labour dispute to be resolved through binding arbitration."

That was sent to me by students from York University. Obviously, it's a bit old, but still relevant.

### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I have a petition here addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas enacting back-to-work legislation for CUPE 3903 sets a devastating precedent for the hard-won right to collectively bargain across this and other sectors; and

"Whereas workers have a right to collectively bargain and the employer has the duty to come to the table and negotiate in good faith;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to vote against back-to-work legislation and send a strong signal of this Legislature's commitment to the collective bargaining process and to reject back-to-work legislation as a bargaining strategy employed by the administration at York University."

It's signed by some number of people who are affected by this particular issue.

### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas negotiations to end the strike between York University and CUPE 3903 have reached a deadlock; and

"Whereas the strike has kept almost 50,000 students out of class for weeks; and

"Whereas the NDP is blocking attempts by the government to get the students back in class and learning again; and

"Whereas the NDP's actions are harming the education of York University students and are a slap in the face to parents and students; and

"Whereas students and parents are concerned that the NDP's continuing opposition to resolving the strike could threaten the academic year for York University students;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ontario New Democratic Party put students and education ahead of ideology and politics, immediately stop their attempts to prolong the York University strike, and support legislation to end the strike."

I sign this petition and pass it over.

### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it reads as follows:

"Whereas enacting back-to-work legislation for CUPE 3903 sets a devastating precedent for the hard-won right to collectively bargain across this and other sectors; and

"Whereas workers have a right to collectively bargain and the employer has the duty to come to the table and negotiate in good faith;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to vote against back-to-work legislation and send a strong signal of this Legislature's commitment to the collective bargaining process and to reject back-to-work legislation as a bargaining strategy employed by the administration at York University."

I agree with this and sign my name to it and send it to the table by way of Shae.

## UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Kuldip Kular:** This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas negotiations to end the strike between York University and CUPE 3903 have reached a deadlock; and

"Whereas the strike has kept almost 50,000 students out of class for weeks; and

"Whereas the NDP is blocking attempts by the government to get students back in class and learning again; and

"Whereas the NDP's actions are harming the education of York University students and are a slap in the face to parents and students; and

"Whereas students and parents are concerned that the NDP's continuing opposition to resolving the strike will threaten the academic year for York University students;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ontario New Democratic Party put students and education ahead of ideology and politics, immediately stop their attempts to prolong the York University strike and support legislation to end the strike."

I agree with the petitioners, so I put my signature on it as well.

## UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Paul Miller:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas enacting back-to-work legislation for CUPE 3903 sets a devastating precedent for the hard-won right of collective bargaining across this and other sectors" in our province; and

"Whereas workers have a right to collectively bargain and the employer has the duty to come to the table and negotiate in good faith;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to vote against back-to-work legislation and send a strong signal of this Legislature's commitment to the collective bargaining process and to reject back-to-work legislation as a bargaining strategy employed by the administration at York University."

I agree with this and sign my name to it, and Shae will bring it up.

## UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I'm very pleased to present a petition today on behalf of Dianne Slater, who lives in beautiful Blenheim, Ontario, and Peterborough, the home of Fleming College and Trent University.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas negotiations to end the strike between York University and CUPE 3903 have reached a deadlock; and

"Whereas the strike has kept almost 50,000 students out of class for weeks; and

"Whereas the NDP is blocking attempts by the government to get students back in class and learning again; and

"Whereas the NDP's actions are harming the education of York University students and are a slap in the face to" both "parents and students; and

"Whereas students and parents are concerned the NDP's continued opposition to resolving the strike could threaten the academic year for York University students;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ontario New Democratic Party put students and education ahead of ideology and politics, immediately stop their attempts to prolong the York University strike and support legislation to end the strike."

I agree with this petition and will happily affix my signature to it.

## UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas negotiations to end the strike between York University and CUPE 3903 have reached a deadlock; and

"Whereas the strike has kept almost 50,000 students out of class for weeks; and

"Whereas the NDP is blocking attempts by the government to get students back in class and learning again; and

"Whereas the NDP's actions are harming the education of York University students and are a slap in the face to parents and students; and

"Whereas students and parents are concerned the NDP's continuing opposition to resolving the strike could threaten the academic year for York University students;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ontario New Democratic Party put students and education ahead of ideology and politics, immediately stop their attempts to prolong the York University strike and support legislation to end the strike."

I agree and sign my signature.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Petitions? The member for—

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Willowdale.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Willowdale.

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The member for Willowdale was up, and I was about to recognize him, before the member for Toronto—Danforth got up, but I'll get back to him.

The member for Willowdale, please.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Go right ahead with your petition, please.

## UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. David Zimmer:** I am pleased to present the following petition.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:



"Whereas negotiations to end the strike between York University and CUPE 3903 have reached a deadlock; and

"Whereas the strike has kept almost 50,000 students out of class for weeks; and

"Whereas the NDP is blocking attempts by the government to get students back into class and learning again; and

"Whereas the NDP's actions are harming the education of York University students and are a slap in the face to parents and students; and

"Whereas students and parents are concerned the NDP's continuing opposition to resolving the strike could threaten the academic year for York University students;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ontario New Democratic Party put students and education ahead of ideology and politics, immediately stop their attempts to prolong the York University strike and support legislation to end the strike."

I'm happy to affix my signature to this.

1320

#### TUITION

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas undergraduate tuition fees in Ontario have increased by 195% since 1990 and are the third-highest in all of the provinces in Canada; and

"Whereas average student debt in Ontario has skyrocketed by 250% in the last 15 years to over \$25,000 for four years of study; and

"Whereas international students pay three to four times more for the same education, and domestic students in professional programs such as law or medicine pay as much tuition as \$20,000 per year; and

"Whereas 70% of new jobs require post-secondary education, and fees reduce the opportunity for many low- and middle-income families while magnifying barriers for aboriginal, rural, racialized and other marginalized students; and

"Whereas Ontario currently provides the lowest per capita funding for post-secondary education in Canada, while many countries fully fund higher education and charge little or no fees for college and university; and

"Whereas public opinion polls show that nearly three quarters of Ontarians think the government's Reaching Higher framework for tuition fee increases of 20% to 36% over four years is unfair;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, support the Canadian Federation of Students' call to immediately drop tuition fees to 2004 levels"—the Mike Harris years—"and petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to introduce a new framework that:

"(1) Reduces tuition and ancillary fees annually for students.

"(2) Converts a portion of every student loan into a grant.

"(3) Increases per student funding above the national average."

I agree with that petition. I will sign it, and I thank the Canadian Federation of Students.

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas enacting back-to-work legislation for CUPE 3903 sets a devastating precedent for the hard-won right to collectively bargain across this and other sectors; and

"Whereas workers have a right to collectively bargain and the employer has the duty to come to the table and negotiate in good faith;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to vote against back-to-work legislation and send a strong signal of this Legislature's commitment to the collective bargaining process and to reject back-to-work legislation as a bargaining strategy employed by the administration at York University."

I affix my signature thereto.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Petitions? The member for Timmins—James Bay.

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Little ol' me got recognized? Oh, wow; nobody got up. That's cool, I gotta say.

Mr. Speaker, I have a petition here—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** No, no. I was surprised nobody else got up. That was the only point. I need my glasses. You caught me totally by surprise.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas enacting back-to-work legislation for CUPE 3903 sets a devastating precedent for the hard-won right to collectively bargain across this and other sectors; and

"Whereas workers have a right to collectively bargain and the employer has the duty to come to the table and negotiate in good faith;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario"—that's us—"to vote against back-to-work legislation and send a strong signal of this Legislature's commitment to the collective bargaining process and to reject back-to-work legislation as a bargaining strategy employed by the administration at York University."

I sign that petition.

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Dave Levac:** This is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas negotiations to end the strike between York University and CUPE 3903 have reached a deadlock; and

"Whereas the strike has kept almost 50,000 students out of class for weeks; and

"Whereas the NDP is blocking attempts by the government to get students back in class and learning again; and

"Whereas the NDP's actions are harming the education of York University students and are a slap in the face to parents and students; and

"Whereas students and parents are concerned the NDP's continuing opposition to resolving the strike could threaten the academic year for York University students;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ontario New Democratic Party put students and education ahead of ideology and politics, immediately stop their attempts to prolong the ... strike and support legislation to end the strike."

I sign this petition and hand it to our usher William.

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I have a petition that reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas enacting back-to-work legislation for CUPE 3903 sets a devastating precedent for the hard-won right to collectively bargain across this and other sectors; and

"Whereas workers have a right to collectively bargain and the employer has the duty to come to the table and negotiate in good faith;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to vote against the back-to-work legislation and send a strong signal of this Legislature's commitment to the collective bargaining process and to reject back-to-work legislation as a bargaining strategy employed by the administration at York University."

I'm in agreement and would sign my name thereto.

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I have a petition from another part of the province which goes as such:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas negotiations to end the strike between York University and CUPE 3903 have reached a deadlock; and

"Whereas the strike has kept almost 50,000 students out of class for weeks; and

"Whereas the NDP is blocking attempts by the government to get students back to class and learning again; and

"Whereas the NDP's actions are harming the education of York University students and are a slap in the face to parents and" those "students; and

"Whereas students and parents are concerned the NDP's continuing opposition to resolving the strike could threaten the academic year for York University students;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ontario New Democratic Party put students and education ahead of" their "ideology and politics,

immediately stop their attempts to prolong the York University strike and support legislation to end the strike."

I sign this petition and hand it again to William, our usher.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I would remind members to stay alert in here because the Chair doesn't know who the next person is who might rise. The rule, of course, in petitions is rotation necessarily, but not necessarily rotation.

Orders of the day.

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** I have a couple of points of order.

I seek unanimous consent for motions for second and third readings of Bill 145 to be put immediately in succession and to be considered this afternoon and voted upon without amendment and without deferral of either vote.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** You're seeking unanimous consent, and I heard a no.

#### HOUSE BUSINESS

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I seek unanimous consent for the House to meet past 6 p.m. today to as late as midnight, if required, for the purpose of considering Bill 145.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Do we have consent? I hear a no.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### YORK UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTES RESOLUTION ACT, 2009

#### LOI DE 2009 SUR LE RÈGLEMENT DES CONFLITS DE TRAVAIL À L'UNIVERSITÉ YORK

Mr. Fonseca moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 145, An Act to resolve labour disputes between York University and Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 3903 / Projet de loi 145, Loi visant à régler les conflits de travail entre l'Université York et la section locale 3903 du Syndicat canadien de la fonction publique.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Mr. Fonseca, the floor is yours.

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** Today I rise to speak to the legislation that would require an end to the deadlocked labour dispute between York University and the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 3903. If passed, this legislation would restore normal operations and instruction at York University.



This is an unfortunate situation. However, we are here to deal with the clear deadlock between York University and CUPE that has come about in this 12-week strike despite extensive attempts at mediation. Ministry of Labour conciliation officers and mediators have been working with the parties to achieve a negotiated agreement. The Premier sent in our top mediator, Reg Pearson, to see if he could help the parties. Even he could not break this impasse.

Throughout all of this, more than 45,000 students have been unable to continue their learning. For these students, their academic year is in jeopardy. The burden of this labour disruption is falling acutely and severely upon them. There remains a clear deadlock.

Our government respects and believes in the collective bargaining process. It is only in special circumstances that government intervention should occur. This is one of those circumstances. In fact, during the time of this government, more than 97% of all negotiations have been successfully resolved without work stoppage.

1330

Under the legislation before the House, all outstanding issues that have not been resolved would be referred to binding arbitration. The continuation of this dispute and its corresponding effects gives rise to serious public interest concerns. If passed, the bill introduced yesterday would require an end to the ongoing work stoppage at York University immediately on royal assent. Employees would be required to resume their duties without delay, and York University would be required to resume normal operations. There would also be a prohibition on any further strike or lockout with respect to this round of collective bargaining.

If the parties have not executed a collective agreement before the day that the act receives royal assent, all outstanding issues and disputes between them would be referred to binding arbitration. They would have five days following royal assent to agree on the appointment of an arbitrator and to notify my office. If they were unable to agree, an arbitrator would be appointed. The final award would be binding on both sides. In the meantime, York students will be back in class.

That is why I'm asking the members of this House to grant speedy passage of this legislation. We're doing this reluctantly; however, the public interest demands that we do this expeditiously.

I would be remiss if I didn't thank all of those who have worked tirelessly on this situation.

First of all, my thanks and gratitude to the staff at the Ministry of Labour's dispute resolution services who have worked with the parties for many weeks to help them hammer out an agreement. They are highly skilled professionals, and the province is lucky to have them in its service.

Many political and public servants have worked jointly to bring us together here in this chamber, including staff of the Ministry of Labour, Cabinet Office, the Ministry of the Attorney General, the Clerk of the House, and you and your staff, Speaker. And to the opposition

members who realize the importance of this extraordinary session of the Legislature—to all of you—our heartfelt thanks.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** It is a pleasure to be here to support this bill, Bill 145.

The minister was remiss. We are here today because of the relentless efforts of one MPP in particular, someone who brought in Bill 135, not Bill 145, and that is Peter Shurman, the MPP from Thornhill. He saw early on the importance of bringing these children and putting them back into the classroom. We hear daily how important this is. I am a little angry with the Liberals, because they could have supported the private member's Bill 135 in December to put the kids back to school. Instead, here we are today needlessly wrangling over procedure rather than wondering what day this week those kids will be back in the classroom.

But this is not the only strike that is affecting the province of Ontario. My municipality, the city of Ottawa, has been engaged in a 48-day transit strike with OC Transpo, and while the jurisdiction in those labour issues doesn't relate to provincial matters, the human interest does. The humanitarian issues are affecting people on ODSP, Ontario Works, the working poor—those people who are trying to scrape two dimes together, who can't afford to put gas in their car because they have to put food on the table. Many people have lost their jobs. The economic impact is \$280 million. Thousands of people have lost their jobs. I have been asking this government, if they really cared, to help the working poor, to help the folks on ODSP and to help the people who need Ontario Works. But they have not done a thing. They continue to dither and delay.

What I find striking in not only the issue with OC Transpo and how we need the Liberal government's help in Ottawa is the fact that the York University strike has continued to drag on, because that is the way they do business.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I must say, as I look across the room, there might be some ex-union people there; there might be some even on this side here. I guess what this government is doing is sending a message to the people of Ontario and the workers of Ontario: "We don't respect collective bargaining." That's what they're doing. What they are doing here is forcing people in a legal strike position, and what we're doing here is creating a new system in Ontario—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Speaker, could I ask for quiet?

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Can I please ask the members to have some respect for their colleague, in terms of their opportunity for questions and comments? We have a long afternoon ahead of us, and I'm hoping that we listen to each other through the process of the afternoon. Thanks very much.



Member for Hamilton East.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I'd like to continue with my line of thought. The fact is that unions in this province have fought for years and years for the ability to have a collective bargaining system. It is under attack. This is the first university to go down the road. There are going to be many more, after this, in the same position. Now we are going to create a system here that forces people in a collective bargaining system to go back to work. Everything is going to become unnecessary. Next it'll be, I don't know, the garbage collectors. Next it'll be all the other types of unions. Every union in this province is going to be under attack for their right to strike, their ability to stand up for themselves.

They might want to ask the CEOs of York University what they make. Maybe you might want to ask why they let 100 people, including professors, go last year. A hundred people retired and they're replacing them with fourth-year students to do the work of a professor. Are you getting quality education? They're doing the best they can and they're underpaid. Some of them are making less than \$20,000 a year. Would you work for less than \$20,000 a year at a university? I doubt it very much.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):**  
Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** The Minister of Labour had a full hour in which to speak and spoke for four minutes. I guess everything he had to say was said in those four minutes. I listened intently to what he kept saying over and over again. I know he must be very mindful of the Supreme Court of Canada decision upon which all of this hinges, because he used the selfsame words. To quote that decision, it says: "Even where a s. 2(d) violation is established, that is not the end of the matter; limitations of s. 2(d) may be justified under s. 1 of the charter, as reasonable limits demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society." And here's the big point: "This may permit interference with the collective bargaining process on an exceptional and typically temporary basis, in situations, for example, involving essential services, vital state administration, clear deadlocks and national crisis."

It's very clear what the minister had to say. He is not saying that this is an essential service, he's not saying it's vital state administration, and he's not saying it's a national crisis. What he is hinging everything in this bill upon is the clear deadlock. I think the minister has an obligation to explain where the clear deadlock arises. He has an obligation to say—if it is the ministry's person who went in there for one day, the ministry person made it very clear that it was York University's refusal to bargain that was causing this, not a clear deadlock between the two sides.

I have no doubt in my mind, with the Liberal majority over there, that this bill will eventually succeed. Nobody in this room is doubting that and the press is not doubting that. But in the end, this will have to bear the scrutiny of the courts, and I do not believe the minister was able to define that clear deadlock in his statement.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):**  
Questions and comments? Response from the minister? Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I will be sharing my time with the member for Simcoe-Grey and the member for Kitchener-Waterloo.

I'm pretty sure the following McGuinty quote is accurate: "Who says you can't be effective in opposition?" For weeks now, I have been trying to get the McGuinty government to recall this Legislature to pass back-to-work legislation. I have implored, I have cajoled, I have been downright mouthy on this, and we're finally here.

I want to say that I appreciate the fact that leadership is not always easy, that tough decisions have to be made, but I did not and still do not understand why the Premier could not bring himself to call us back earlier. We could have dealt with the strike immediately. To me it was a no-brainer: 50,000 students were unfairly bearing the brunt of an irresponsible job action. Without having some special gift or being any more intelligent than anyone else here, I did what normal people do: I went to visit the students. I attended a rally, I weighed the information coming from all sides and I concluded that this was going nowhere fast.

1340

Now, literally millions of lost dollars later; now, literally millions of lost lecture hours later; now, with countless lost jobs, a compromised academic year for thousands and sabotaged graduate plans later, we are finally here. Am I supposed to feel good now? In view of all these things, that would be inappropriate. So I am not going to say that I'm happy to be here. Suffice it to say that I am more relieved to be sitting across from the McGuinty government in this Legislature than I ever thought I would be.

On November 18, 12 days after the beginning of the strike, I made a statement in the Legislature asking the government for action, and I posed a question. I asked that we get the striking CUPE 3903 local back to work, get an objective bargaining process going, lose the unreasonable union demands and work towards a fast and responsible agreement so that students could do what they were supposed to be doing, which is getting an education. On January 24, Premier McGuinty conceded that the sides are "in a clear deadlock, and despite our best efforts to bring the sides together, that has not changed." It took only four attempts at mediation for the government to realize that they weren't doing enough.

The day before I made my first statement in the Legislature regarding the York University strike, I attended a rally organized by a group of students who banded together under the name YorkNotHostage. Students representing that group were in the Legislature yesterday and again in the Legislature here today, and what a tenacious, remarkable group they are. They have been outspoken activists fighting to return to their classes, and I would like to recognize them and commend them for the work they've done to bring their message to the government. We all owe them a debt of gratitude.



They, like their fellow students that I met at that rally, recognized the writing on the wall in the first days of the strike, and so did I, not because I or they had any special information but just because we paid attention. I went out there and talked to the kids. We in the opposition could see the potential for disaster. We could see the propensity for a prolonged strike and the consequences that it would carry for 50,000 students and their parents. We could see it, with clarity, right from the onset.

I've warned this government for months that the strike needed the attention of decisive leadership; that my office was receiving hundreds of calls, e-mails and letters from students, parents and even faculty members who were part of the striking union, asking me to get the government to pass back-to-work legislation. I've even had constituents from ridings represented by Liberal MPPs call my office to ask for help because they were being given only excuses and platitudes by their own members. What is that about? Don't we all have the same responsibility to those who elect us? In this Legislature, all those constituents were represented, all their concerns were put before the Premier, but he persistently declined to act. He answered my primary question on November 18 himself, when I asked him about his office using moral suasion by way of a couple of phone calls. After that, it was always deferred to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities or the Minister of Labour, who now must surely hold the world record for repeating themselves. They repeated, right to the bitter end, any number of variations of, "Let's leave it to work itself out." We knew it couldn't, and so you delayed. You delayed.

So while I am relieved to be able to speak to a bill that is meant to get students back to their classrooms right away, my relief is tainted by the knowledge that the Premier did not act in time to ensure a full quality of education, which York University students and their parents have paid for, together with the taxpayers of Ontario. He did not act in time to make sure that summer jobs that students depended on were not put in jeopardy. He did not act in time to make sure that graduate plans were not sabotaged. He and his government did not put students first. They did not put education first. They didn't even put the union or the school first. They put politics first.

This is not an education government, and this is not an education Premier. Liberal members should be ashamed of themselves for twiddling their thumbs as thousands were suffering the consequences of their so-called neutrality. York has been choking on that neutrality for 11-plus weeks, and this government is as responsible for the loss of income, education and employment opportunities as any CUPE 3903 member who voted to continue that strike.

You've put the future of these students in jeopardy, Premier. You didn't rise to the challenge; you didn't step up when they looked to you. Instead of standing up for students, this government has given us more than 11 weeks of excuses, platitudes and stonewalling. As I've

said to the students, your education this year has been a tough lesson. You have learned that there's always a victim, and it's you.

We were told that the government would not get involved because of the autonomy of universities. This is the same government that can't seem to wait to tell us what we should eat, what type of dog we can own, who can and who cannot be a passenger in our cars, how we take care of our lawns and what types of car seats we use for our children—never even mentioning the idea of individual autonomy and the dignity of each person as being fit to make his or her own good decisions.

"Mediator" was the government's answer to everything. Even after the striking CUPE 3903 rejected the last university offer, the Premier's solution was to send a mediator again. The Einstein definition of insanity is doing the same thing repeatedly and expecting a different result. This from the individual charged with the responsibility of getting our province through one of the most significant economic challenges that we have experienced; this is the Premier of Ontario, who is supposed to be implementing innovative and creative solutions to get our province back on track, to push it again to be the front-runner in this country. Seven months of negotiations, five university contract offers, five union counter-offers and three failed attempts at mediation, and still, when push came to shove, the Premier's idea of a speedy resolution was to implement a method that had repeatedly failed to produce any results.

There's been no movement on this dispute since November. I suspect that after each mediation attempt, the mediators reported as much to the Premier. The parties were clearly in a deadlock, and yet the Premier refused to move. Even earlier this week, after students had already wasted 10 weeks of their year, he was content to wait. The students are beyond apoplectic and the published numbers of prospective students for first-year university are up in all Ontario universities except for one that's down, and it's York. We knew that a week ago.

The Premier's reasons for not acting at this very critical stage were many and diverse, each as unfounded as the other. First, there was the notion of autonomy and neutrality. Then, this past week, at one point he pointed to the possible opposition of the NDP, much to the surprise of my NDP colleagues, I'm told, who had not at that point even been approached by the Premier's office regarding back-to-work legislation, any more than our party had. A couple of hours later, he was using a court decision to hide behind. Now he seems to be afraid of the union taking him to court over the legislation we are now considering.

I would remind members that this Premier had no qualms about dragging parents of autistic children through court, trying to get them to pay for government legal costs simply because those parents dared to demand the services, some of which were actually educational and which Dalton McGuinty had promised them. Why is Premier McGuinty so afraid of unions?

*Interjections.*



**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** I'd like to remind the members that we're here for debate, and debate can only happen when we listen to each other in this chamber. So please, keep order. Thank you.

Mr. Shurman.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I say again, why is Premier McGuinty so afraid of the unions? Is it because unions are behind Working Families? Is he concerned that those unions won't be there to support him in 2011? Is this the real reason behind his obvious dithering?

This Premier has done nothing but preach about how Ontario had to prepare for a knowledge-based economy and the importance of post-secondary education for Ontario's future workers. Why, then, would he allow this strike to go on so long? Why would he allow students and their parents to suffer and be the unwitting and left-out victims in this dispute?

I want to ask the people of Ontario if they are really willing to put their faith in a Premier who has turned every stone looking for excuses not to take action to protect 50,000 futures. If this Premier and this government were serious about creating a better Ontario, they would listen to the people in this province and they would work with this opposition.

When we hear the government members screaming at us to stand up for Ontario every time we ask a question that pertains to the economy, we want to shout that we've never sat down. Doesn't the Premier listen to experts and shouldn't he be paying attention to knowledgeable sources? If he were serious about a better Ontario, he would have listened to us and he would have listened to experts as we warned of approaching economic storms that now lash us individually and as a province. Instead, the Premier was content to do nothing and to say, "This too shall pass."

The York situation was no different. This government ignored students, it ignored MPPs calling on them to take action, and it ignored the opinions of people directly involved with the university. Who are you listening to?

1350

On January 15, 12 deans of York in an open letter urged the striking union to accept the latest university offer, calling it reasonable and most responsible given the economic crisis. We read that, and all of you read that, 11 days ago. Still the Premier's office stayed silent and refused to get off the sidelines, satisfied to let things just work themselves out, until we hit 11 weeks and the maximum potential for damage was achieved. They've had 11 weeks to prepare for back-to-work legislation.

While I will be voting to send students back to school, the bill we are discussing here today is not the optimal solution to the problem that we face. It does send York students back to school now, but what about next time? How long before these students are again faced with the threat of a strike? With this legislation there is no protection for those students in their first or second year who may very well have to experience another strike in 2010 if the union isn't required to sign a minimum three-year contract. We had asked for that, and those kids need

it—yet another example of a band-aid approach to problems, with the government not thinking further than its nose into the future to be proactive and to prevent similar disastrous disputes.

Many contracts in many universities across this province expire at the same time in 2010, with hundreds of thousands of students at risk. How will those negotiations go? I don't expect that anyone should want York's contracts expiring at that same point. As we speak, the CUPE local at U of T may be preparing for its own job action. Is the government willing to admit that they've made a mistake in waiting so long to end the York University strike? Will the Premier commit to protecting U of T students when he failed to protect York's student body?

How many universities will have to prepare for a strike in 2010, and how will the province get ready for a possible lockout of over 300,000 university students? Will we punish administrations for trying to be responsible with their money, the government's money, our money, by making them subject to irresponsible union demands by threat of strike?

Some media reports have suggested that York's applications have dropped by 15%. How can we expect any of our universities to be financially responsible, especially in these economic times, when they are faced with falling admission numbers due to uncertain labour conditions? Earlier, the Premier said that York sustained a black eye. What he didn't say is that while the punches were being thrown, he was the bystander. He did nothing.

At a time when we need a skilled, trained and educated workforce, the government is especially responsible for protecting education. It is as vital a resource to Ontario going forward as we could possibly have. These are the challenges that I expect a government to answer to and right now the challenges that I expect this government to answer to.

I, with the backing of my colleagues, want to know how this government will protect education from being hijacked by strikes, because the York issue is not the first and not the last labour dispute on the horizon. I mentioned U of T, I mentioned other universities that will find themselves in bargaining territory in 2010—all at the same time—but I want to take this opportunity to highlight an even more imminent threat.

We've been given the indication that, come March, elementary teachers may be considering a job action of their own that would leave thousands of children without school. I need each and every parent in Ontario to pay attention to this, to write, to e-mail, to call, to contact their MPP, to contact the education minister, to contact the Premier, to make sure that they understand that waiting 11 weeks to protect education is not an option for this government anymore.

Mr. McGuinty and his ministers took York University students and their parents to the very brink in this strike. We cannot allow them to repeat the same mistake with our elementary schools. This is not to suggest that I am opposed to collective bargaining. I respect the process, but sometimes things just don't work out.



This situation, more than anything else, has shown how it can be used irresponsibly and with serious consequences. The people who had the most at stake, who bore the brunt of the strike, who were in fact held hostage by it, had no voice at the table. The striking workers, whose responsibility is to be looking out for the education of the students enrolled in their university, didn't take them into consideration. Students are instead being used as pawns, first in the dispute between CUPE and the university and now between the Liberals and the NDP, and they continue to pay dearly.

The message I want all bargaining units to hear is that the right to bargain should not be considered arbitrary. The right to bargain extends only so far as the rights of those affected by the bargaining process. Once those rights are infringed upon, it is the government's responsibility to step in to protect them. This I believe with no apology. So the message that I'm sending to you is not "no collective bargaining" but "responsible collective bargaining."

Premier McGuinty, you are not here to protect us from ourselves, as much as you would like to continue to play dad to Ontario. You are here to protect us from each other, a job you've never more clearly failed at than in the York University example.

To those who are considering job action, I urge you to consider not only your wish list, but the circumstances around you: the economic conditions and the impact that your demands will have on your organization.

To my colleagues on the NDP benches, I urge you to lend your support to allow this bill to be put to a vote as quickly as possible so that students have a chance to salvage what is left of their year. That trumps all other considerations.

Just reading student comments on the discussion boards, you can appreciate the devastating impact that the cancellation of classes has had on them, and I would like to read just a few.

"After months and months of my life being putting on hold I will be glad to get back," writes Shannon.

"What I would like to see is Mr. McGuinty be held accountable for his inaction. We as York students have been asked to put our lives on hold. We had to sit on the sidelines and have our education stolen from us, our careers ruined, and face economic hardship. Those who sought election to represent us within and outside of the university remained silent. I ask that when York and Ontario return to the polls we as students remember this, remember who sat on the sidelines and let this happen, remember who stood up for us and who played politics. As was once so famously said, a government that seeks another mandate seeks to do nothing. I can finally move on with some certainty in my life," writes Mario.

From Anisa: "I am so happy that my life will be back."

Again, I hope that while you may feel inclined to not vote in support of this legislation, you will feel compelled not to stand in the way of students getting back to their classrooms at the earliest opportunity—this

to my friends in the NDP. Delaying a vote will only succeed in creating additional hardships for students who, as you can see, have already suffered more than their fair share.

Finally, I want to send a special message to all the students that I had the chance to meet and speak with during the course of the strike.

Aside from attending the rallies and joining students at media interviews and other events, last Monday our leader, John Tory, our critic for training, colleges and universities, Jim Wilson, and I had the opportunity to sit down at the campus and speak with some of the students, as well as a parent or two, to discuss the impact of the strike and the options open to them to salvage their year. I want to reassure the members of this House that if these are the people looking to lead us in the future, there is much reason for optimism.

Lyndon Koopmans, Catherine Divaris and Matthew Geigen-Miller: You and your fellow students have been instrumental in getting the Premier of Ontario to this Legislature, and while I know that this wasn't the type of education you were setting out for when you started your year, I hope that you are able to take something away from it. My thanks to all the students for their continued support and kind messages. I, along with the members of the PC caucus and, I am certain, MPPs from all parties, wish you all the very best of luck in your studies and all your future plans.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Thank you. Member for Simcoe—Grey.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** It's with regret that I rise, actually, as the critic for training, colleges and universities for the Progressive Conservative Party. I regret having to be here today; it was so unnecessary. But I will share a few thoughts about Bill 145.

Before I do that, I do want to thank John Tory and our colleague from Thornhill, Peter Shurman, who, right from the very beginning, way, way back just a few days after the November 6 strike began, introduced his private member's bill. The government, of course, refused to deal with it, but he stuck with it. He's been persistent day after day, hour after hour, not only representing all 50,000 students and their need to get back to their education, but also the thousands of students and faculty who live in his riding, as the riding of Thornhill abuts the campus of York University. So he was best suited and on his own initiative took the leadership of this issue, along with John, and for that we are truly grateful.

**1400**

We're here today because for 80 long days the Liberal government and the self-styled education Premier refused to act to bring an end to the strike at Canada's third-largest university, shutting out about 50,000 students in the thick of a major economic crisis, resulting in the longest university strike in Canadian history. Because of the unashamed inaction of this government, the education of those 50,000 students and their school year were under threat of being entirely wiped out. For over 80 days now, the students have lived in fear as they've watched their



financial resources dwindle and employment opportunities disappear while their education and graduation plans teetered on the brink of destruction. This is and was unacceptable.

The Progressive Conservative caucus wants an end to this strike immediately. We believe in putting students first. This strike has been devastating for students and their parents, which is evidenced by the thousands of e-mails that they have sent almost daily to all MPPs in this House, pleading for action. Most of the e-mails went like this:

"To whom it may concern:

"I feel like I am being held hostage for months since November 6, 2008. I am a student at York University and CUPE 3903 is on strike. Against my will, I (and about 50,000 other students) have not been able to attend classes. I am asking for your assistance in bringing an end to this unfortunate situation. Please do not ignore my plea. Help me. I want to return to my classes.

"Your assistance in this matter will be viewed most positively during the next election."

This same e-mail was sent thousands of times to members of the Liberal government dating back to November, and all that these innocent students got in response from the Liberal government was shoulder-shrugging indifference. The Liberals have repeatedly refused to act in the best interests of students.

There were more e-mails and pleas for help. Some of them went into greater detail about their particular situation, like this one from my constituent Darlene, from Collingwood:

"Dear Mr. Wilson:

"I am writing you in response to today's overwhelming rejection of York University's latest contract offer by the members of the CUPE union. As you are aware, this strike has been ongoing since November 6, 2008. I am appalled that this strike has been allowed to continue for this period of time. It appears to me that the members of this union are not aware of, nor care about, the financial constraints that the entire country is facing at this time. Many contracts throughout Ontario have been settled with raises of 1% to 3%, yet these students and faculty members are asking for over 15% in the next two years. I am wondering how many of these students on strike are collecting OSAP.

"My son is currently enrolled at York and he has paid over \$12,000 in program and residence fees. The university is now saying that they will make up the time by extending the school year. My son has always worked over the summer as his contribution to his fees and for his spending money. Extending the term into the summer will place a hardship not only on my family, but also on those students who rely on summer employment to finance their year. I am also concerned about new residence fees that might now be incurred due to an extension as he is not able to commute on a daily basis.

"I am asking that the government of Ontario step in and order these members back to work under binding

arbitration so that these students can get back to work on their programs of study.

"Yours truly,

"Darlene."

There were more e-mails:

"Dear Jim:

"As a parent of a student who should be attending York, I wish that you would put pressure on the government to get the strikers back to work and the students back in class.

"There is a great deal of harm being done, and back-to-work legislation should have been introduced long before now.

"Thanks for your assistance,

"Ross." He's from my town of Wasaga Beach.

Another one from a gentleman in Newmarket:

"Dear Mr. Wilson,

"I'm writing to you about my frustration over the strike at York University.

"My daughter, Jennifer, is in her first year and has been out of school for over two months now. CUPE 3903, representing the teaching assistants and part-time teaching staff, are preventing over 50,000 students from obtaining the education they've paid for.

"I'm a single parent raising two teenage daughters. I'm making support payments to my ex-wife. With this financial burden, I worry about being able to afford a university education for my daughters.

"Jennifer has a part-time job and only works on weekends while enrolled at York University. My ex-wife and I contributed to Jennifer's tuition as best we could. OSAP offered just over \$100 toward her tuition.

"That was a big disappointment given our limited finances. Anyway, with Jennifer's small savings and with scholarships, Jennifer was able to get into York. Jennifer commutes from Newmarket to save on the cost of residence. This strike is threatening her school year. My youngest daughter, Beki, is in grade 12 this year and would like to attend York next year. I'm worried about her chances of getting into York in September not knowing what impact this strike will have on the current and September semesters. I'm hoping that my finances will permit both Jennifer and Beki to get their university education over the next few years.

"CUPE 3903 has rejected the latest contract offer. Their demands seem out of touch with today's economic situation. Students are losing job opportunities they had planned for the summer due to the uncertainty of the school year. Students living away from home are going into debt trying to pay their rent as they wait for the strike to be settled. I believe that the Legislature does not return from its Christmas break until February. If the government does not get involved until then, it could be too late to save the school year that should normally be ending in April. Can you please do what is in your power to end this strike and get the students back? Your help is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

"Sincerely,

"David from Newmarket."



Of course, there are hundreds, thousands of others with the same sentiments as those I've just read. While these e-mails were being sent and while students held rallies and signed petitions, nobody from the Liberal government did anything. They sat on their hands until yesterday in the face of a crisis. As I said, the Progressive Conservative Party is in favour of this back-to-work legislation. We will support this bill. Our party has been calling for it since November. But as I said too, there's no reason, really, for us to be here today. This bill could have and should have been passed before the Legislature adjourned for Christmas. We urged that, and my colleague from Thornhill even introduced his own bill to bring the students back to class, which the Liberals refused to support.

This situation is clearly an embarrassment for this government, but their management of our colleges and universities in general is equally bleak. The real underlying issue here is the overall negligence of post-secondary education in Ontario by this Liberal government.

Jeff Rybak, a blogger for Maclean's magazine, explained one of the reasons why he thinks the situation at York is a lot more about government policy than it is about labour unrest. He wrote:

"Viewed only as a labour action you'd certainly tend to think this strike is about compensation for work, wouldn't you? Not for all the graduate students on strike, it isn't. This strike includes teaching assistants, research assistants and contract faculty all in the same bargaining unit. With the exception of the last group, they're almost all graduate students. These aren't ordinary workers on strike. These are students in their own right. And they have all the same concerns common to all students, including the cost of their education."

Mr. Rybak claims that one of the issues is that "this is a cost-of-education strike disguised as a labour action." If this is indeed the case, then that speaks volumes to how this government has completely mismanaged post-secondary education in Ontario. The Liberals have long claimed to be funding an additional \$6.2 billion for post-secondary education through their Reaching Higher plan, when in fact, when you actually look at the estimates and you actually question the minister, you see that there's really a little less than \$250 million in new funding each year. If 50% of what is being invested today is going right out the window to finance their higher enrolment or increased utility and energy costs, you're not that far ahead when you actually crunch the numbers and pay the bills. That's what the Council of Ontario Universities has said. In fact, they said that "when university ... inflation ... is factored in, the resources per student are likely to leave Ontario still near last place among provinces in per student funding for universities."

A report by the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance confirms it. They say, "Unfortunately, statistics indicate that with the marked increase of students into post-secondary education," the government's investment "will have little impact." Undeniably, after five years of Liberal government, students in Ontario know that only

Alabama has a more disgraceful funding record in all of North America. In Canada, we are dead last, 10 out of 10 of all the provinces, in terms of per capita funding for universities. We're second-last with respect to per student funding; we're dead last if you count it on per capita funding and we have the second-highest tuition fees in all of Canada, right here. Only Alabama, in all of North America, has a worse record.

We also have the largest class sizes, on average, in all of Canada and the worst student-to-faculty ratio in all of Canada. In fact, in 1988-89, there was a 17-to-1 student-to-faculty ratio in Ontario. Now, under the Dalton McGuinty government, in 2007 and 2008, there was a 27-to-1 student-to-faculty ratio. Again, the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance reports that if Ontario is to meet the national average, it needs to decrease its student-to-faculty ratio to 22 to 1. If it wants to compete with peer jurisdictions, it needs to decrease the ratio to 15 to 1. They also say that it has been estimated that Ontario requires—I've heard this from the faculty association too—beginning this year, 11,000 new faculty to meet increased enrolment capacity and retirements.

1410

All these are more broken promises from the Liberals. Back in 1999, Mr. McGuinty not only made a promise, he signed a pledge as opposition leader that, if elected, he would bring per student funding in Ontario up to the national average in his first term in office. If you walk into my office, I've got a big, blown-up picture of that photo op of Mr. McGuinty signing the pledge. It's quite like the one that said he wouldn't raise our taxes, and it has about as much value. Well, your first term, I say to the government, has passed, it's now been over five years since you came to office, and we're still 10 out of 10, dead last in Canada, the laughingstock of our country when it comes to funding our universities. The Liberals like to talk about throwing a little money here for books and a little money there for travel or some for new classrooms, but they need to get tuitions in line and get per student funding up. There's no point in building new classrooms if you don't have the faculty and teachers to put in them.

Then there's the issue of the student access guarantee. The government has said that no qualified Ontario student will be prevented from attending Ontario's public colleges and universities due to a lack of financial support programs, and yet they don't keep statistics, so you wouldn't know. Unless people write to us directly and say, "I couldn't afford to go. That's why I didn't go," we wouldn't know. There's no way of keeping statistics. But we do know, and the minister admitted it when I asked him in estimates late last year, that 20,000 students a year are turned away from OSAP. So where are those 20,000 going? We don't know that, but we can assume they applied for OSAP because they needed it and we can assume they wanted to have a post-secondary education. So for them to say that no qualified Ontario student is or will be prevented from attending is just a bunch of—



**Interjection: Hooey.**

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** —hooey. It doesn't sound like much of a guarantee; it sounds like just a bunch of rhetoric.

Not only that, but part-time students don't even qualify for OSAP, and students are only allowed to earn \$2,300 through part-time employment without being penalized with lower loan assessments or repayments. Rather than prioritizing the government's existing resources to properly fund post-secondary education—and by the way, the budget has gone up how much, 30%, since they've come to office? Where did the money go? We now have an almost \$100-billion budget, and when they came into office it was \$68 billion. It's about prioritizing your programs and what's important to you. You would think, if you were the education minister, that you would be doing exactly that because that's what you told people you would do.

Certainly, the students at York University know that their lives have not improved under the McGuinty government and this education Premier. The Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance in their pre-budget submission to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs called for a long-term vision for post-secondary education in Ontario. It's badly needed, and yet again this government has no plan; again, five years in office and still no plan. Students and parents know that this is true, and it's evidenced by our being here today.

The Progressive Conservative Party believes it is crucial that we find ways to improve access to higher education in the face of higher tuition fees. We know that it's becoming a barrier to so many of Ontario's youth, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, and we have urged the government to act. Yet, the Liberals seem to have no plan to even have a plan to help students.

Again, these are all part of the reason that we're here today. This is not just about a disagreement between CUPE and the administration at York University; this is about Liberal mismanagement of the post-secondary education system. I suspect that maybe one of the reasons the government has been so reluctant to call the Legislature back to have this debate—again, I say they are embarrassed. The fact that we are here today speaks volumes of failed leadership. Until yesterday, they refused to act while 50,000 students feared the loss of their school year and wondered how they will possibly make ends meet if the strike is allowed to continue. It's completely irresponsible, and this government should be ashamed of their inaction. This legislation is embarrassingly late but, as John Tory said, it's better late than never.

So I say to the students watching today that John Tory and the Progressive Conservative Party and caucus are on your side and we have been throughout this strike, and we will do our very best to help you get back to class as soon as possible. We will continue to fight for you in this Legislature by urging the government to use its resources better, to help ensure that you and your friends are able to access post-secondary education, and we will push the

government to come up with a long-term plan so that you can get the best education money can buy.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** The member for Kitchener—Waterloo.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I want to compliment, first of all, my colleague from Thornhill for the outstanding presentation he made on behalf of getting the York students back to class. Certainly, his advocacy on their behalf has been strong. He has been pushing for this to happen now for almost 80 days, and it's long overdue. And, of course, my colleague from Simcoe—Grey, our critic, has very, very competently pointed out the mismanagement of our post-secondary educational system by this government and their failure to develop a plan to address the needs of our students.

Of course, this is what we see in almost every area of life in the province of Ontario. Not only do they not have a plan for post-secondary education; they don't have a plan to restore the economy to economic health; they don't have a plan for health care. As a result, we now see long waiting lists, we see people without doctors, we see hospitals unable to balance their budgets, we see about 24,000 people waiting for long-term-care beds, we see people in hospitals who should be in alternative levels of care, we see the nurses who were going to be hired no longer on track—an additional 9,000. The family health teams aren't going to be here. This government simply has no plan.

It is very ironic that we are here today and the Liberal government now, after 80 days of no action, is trying to blame the NDP for blocking this back-to-work legislation. They had an opportunity to respond on many occasions. They were urged to do so by the members for Simcoe—Grey and Thornhill and by our leader, John Tory. However, they did not respond until the very last minute, when it now appears that this is the longest strike in Canada ever. They should be very embarrassed that they failed to respond to the concerns of parents and students and that this strike has created a tremendous amount of hardship and there is going to be financial loss for the students.

This government would have been well advised also, as they considered what action they could take, to have taken a page out of the book of President Obama. They could have attempted to act in a non-partisan way. This is not a partisan issue. All three parties in this House were, I believe, committed to getting these students back into class. However, this government, in its usual manner, failed to consult with the other two parties. There was no House leaders' meeting. I've been here; I've been here since the strike started, and I know the NDP have been as well. Nobody brought us together to point out to us that there was a problem and ask, were we prepared to look at solutions to resolve this issue? Oh no. This government, one more time, decided to go it alone and, of course, at the last minute, shortly after 9 o'clock on Saturday, informed the opposition parties that there was a bill. Suddenly it had become an emergency and suddenly we



were going to have to sit on a Sunday. Why? I don't know.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Drama.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** We could have come back a week ago.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Just drama.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** We could have done this before Christmas.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Political drama.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** It was simply, as my colleague said, political drama. It was an attempt to make sure that the whole world, particularly here in the province of Ontario, was focused on this issue. It's really quite regrettable.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Now you're blaming the NDP.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** And now you're trying to blame the NDP. This is not the fault of the NDP; this is your fault. You have mismanaged this issue from day one. You knew, as all of us knew, that all of the consultation and the negotiations that had been going on before the strike were resulting in deadlock. You knew that. This didn't just happen with the start of the strike. You refused to put students first. You refused to bring the House leaders together. You refused to try to work at a solution in a very non-partisan way. You just didn't want, I guess, to behave as we're seeing south of the border.

1420

So here we sit. We've now wasted two more days. These students, by the way, when they heard the announcement on Saturday, were very hopeful that classes could have started today. They were very, very hopeful. If you had called us together, you would have known the position of the NDP and you could have taken steps to deal with it. So there's no excuse whatsoever. You're now trying to shift the blame to the NDP for keeping the students out and preventing the passage of the bill. If you'd taken action earlier, if you'd called the House leaders together, this issue could have been resolved. Well, I can tell you, the public is not buying it. Everybody knows about the virtual deadlock in the negotiations well before the strike began, and there's—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Member for Kitchener–Waterloo. I'd like to have order in the House, please. Member for Brant, member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, please. We still have many hours to go this afternoon, and I would ask that the members get back to a more respectful tone within the chamber. Thanks very much.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** So I hope today that all people in this House, from all three parties, will put partisanship aside, will focus on the needs of the students and the families who have suffered terribly and that we can take the decisive action that is necessary today and support this bill. Let's get the students back in the classroom, and then, at some point in time, deal with the other issues, which, as my colleague our critic has pointed out, are huge. We have huge problems in post-secondary education, but today our priority needs to be

on the students and getting them back into school. I urge you to support this bill at the earliest possible chance.

**Hon. John Milloy:** On a point of order: I seek unanimous consent that, notwithstanding standing order 81(c), Bill 145 may be called during orders of the day in both morning and afternoon meetings tomorrow, January 27, 2009.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** The minister has asked for unanimous consent. Agreed? I heard a no.

**Hon. John Milloy:** On a point of order: I wish to inform the House that the government has no business to be called tomorrow morning.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Thank you. Questions and comments on the remarks from the member for Kitchener–Waterloo, the member for Simcoe–Grey and the member for Thornhill?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Two minutes will allow me to do only one comment, but I would like to commend my friends from the Progressive Conservative caucus. I agreed with much of what they had to say. There was only one thing that I took some umbrage with, and I'm going to deal with that, and that was the statement made by the member from Thornhill. In leading up, when he first started, he said that the union had, over the course of the time, made a series of unreasonable demands.

The question I have to ask of him is: What were the unreasonable demands that the union was making? Were the demands that there be tenure for some of the staff unreasonable? Was that unreasonable? Was the unreasonable demand that \$17,000, that being the highest pay that a person can get as a teaching assistant or a contract professor—was that what was unreasonable, because the workers thought that was not sufficient money? Was it unreasonable that they were seeking job security? I think that was the major element in the whole process: that they were trying to get some form of job security so they didn't have to go back each and every year and apply for their jobs back and hope to get them.

Last but not least, and the fourth element of the whole negotiation, was an improvement to benefits. They were seeking improvement to benefits that included dental care for themselves and for their children. Was that what was an unreasonable demand? In the end, this was a union trying to do what I think was best for its members and, in large part, for the long term, what was best for the university and for the students who go there.

So the question is, was the union being unreasonable in seeking these four things: the tenure, a wage increase above the poverty line, job security for its faculty and improvements to benefits for themselves and for their children and families? I hope that the member, if he gets an opportunity to respond—and I know he may not because his two colleagues may respond—can tell me whether or not those were unreasonable.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I, too, would like to commend the member for his tenacity on this subject—and also the



nice comments from the front bench. However, I have some questions for the member.

I asked the member if any of his constituents are union members and if he asked for their opinions. Did the member discuss the position of the union with the leaders of the union? Is the member in possession of the last union offer, which was filled with concessions? Was the member aware that they were four points away from a settlement? Would this member suggest that all collective agreements in this province be deemed an essential service so there would be no more unions? Would this official opposition suggest that none of the students graduating from their courses will become future members of unions? Would he suggest that they give up their bargaining rights in the future? If that's the case, we're in a sorry state of affairs.

I suggest to the official opposition, I suggest to the government, that the whole bargaining process, since back into the 1930s and 1940s when unions were formed in Ontario, has brought Ontarians a lifestyle that can be matched nowhere else in the world. They did hard work, they fought hard, they went on strike. I myself have been on three strikes. We fought for what we've got. All these young kids who are coming out of university are going to have the ability to live a good life because of unions and because of their ability to negotiate contracts and agreements.

Will this government, will the official opposition, stamp out the rights of unions in this province to negotiate and call them all essential services in the future? Are they going to do this with all the universities? I'll tell you right now, you're going to have a heck of a fight in Hamilton, because we've probably got up to 20,000 members at McMaster who are with CUPE and other organizations.

This isn't going to go away. You can't stamp out the rights of people to negotiate in this province. What's going on here is a disgrace.

I'll tell you right now—my final comment: This is going to be challenged in the courts and all of you are going to retract what you've done.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** The Conservative members of the House have talked about the situation we find ourselves in. They've talked about the actions of the government. I think it's fitting that we're here debating this today, because in the end, the decisions that have driven the strike at York University were decisions made in budgets that have been brought down over the last decade, decisions that have left Ontario in last place for funding per capita for post-secondary education.

There's no question at all that there's fallout when you make decisions like that. If you throw people into a room without food, without water, without adequate air, they come into conflict. If you put people into universities where there are not adequate resources for teaching, if you tell university administrations, "Make it up as you go along. See how you can pull together the ends that

ultimately don't meet," you will find that there will be conflict; you will find that there will be intransigence.

A man who styles himself as the education Premier has put us in a situation now where there is conflict on our campuses that need not have been there at any point. If in fact funding had been adequate, if in fact full-time staff, tenured faculty, had been hired consistently, if in fact we didn't have to increasingly rely on part-time temporary work, that would change the nature of the relations between the union and the administration in this university—and not just here. Be well aware that strike votes have been taken at other universities in this province. Be aware that when you talk to the people who teach in our community colleges, those who are part-time have been in a desperate situation for years. They have been deprived of the right to strike, deprived of the right to organize, and finally now will begin to assert their rights. This is only the beginning.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I look forward to voting on this bill as quickly as possible.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Response? The member for Thornhill.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** The question here is not whether collective bargaining works or doesn't work. It's not whether I or any of my colleagues support collective bargaining or not, because we do. It is about the question, when is enough too much? Enough became too much when we considered the fact that this was a contract that expired mid-2008 and was still being negotiated, had negotiations persisted, even now, and for how long we don't know—50,000 students being affected, and there was something more below the surface. This was the thing that, I suppose, caught my fancy when I went out to that original rally and was handed a piece of paper by somebody that listed 18 universities in Ontario that are attached in one way or another through labour agreements with CUPE.

1430

CUPE has obviously been orchestrating these agreements to expire at approximately the same time. Over half of the universities in the province are now affected. If York goes ahead, as the union would want, then we would go above half, U of T the same thing, and ultimately approximately 14 of the 18 universities would be affected. So the end game would appear to be to bring the province to its knees, with over 300,000 students being affected midway through 2010. If you connect the dots, that's not only an economic hardship; it's not only an educational hardship; it takes the individual student who entered university at a place like York this year and says, "Guess what? You just went through 11 or 12 weeks of strike and, by the way, 15 months from now you're going to do it again." I heard one of the members say that there were only four demands left, and one was for a two-year contract. That was precisely what this was about. I thank my friends from Beaches-East York, Hamilton East-Stoney Creek, Brant and Toronto-Danforth.



As far as union members in my riding, there are plenty of them, including ones in York, and there's one in me. That's the card.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Further debate? The leader of the Ontario NDP.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I'm pleased to be able to participate in this debate. I want to say at the outset that this is an important debate. This is our job, to ensure that good legislation is passed and to ensure that bad legislation is not passed. There are a number of issues surrounding this legislation that I think the people across Ontario ought to know about.

In contrast, the McGuinty Liberals suddenly, in a sudden mood of panic, are saying, "This legislation should be passed with no debate, no discussion, no examination of the facts, no questions, no answers, no thought, no criticism." This is, all a sudden, panic. These students were out of the classroom in the fall. What did the McGuinty Liberals do? I remember being in this House and debating material that was, frankly, of little consequence. I remember coming here some mornings and seeing that the House was recessed because the McGuinty Liberals had nothing to present to the Legislature. But now suddenly it's a panic, and we're all supposed to forget our brains and we're all supposed to forget our jobs. We're not supposed to ask any questions. We're not supposed to ask about the facts or conduct any examination or demand any answers. Well, I intend to do my job. I intend to ask some questions. If Liberals want to behave like some kinds of mindless automatons, you do that, but there are serious questions that need to be asked here. The government had better come up with some answers.

But I want to deal first with: How could this government suddenly have a panic attack? Suddenly this is an immediate emergency. I want to ask: What do the McGuinty Liberals have to hide? What are they afraid of in debate or discussion? What are they afraid of in democracy? Isn't that what democracy is about: thoughtful discussion, debate, asking questions, examining the facts? What are the McGuinty Liberals so afraid of in democratic debate, in democratic discussion?

Let me suggest what the McGuinty Liberals are afraid of. The McGuinty Liberals start from one end of the province, talking about education. Oh, they talk about education. They want everyone to believe that they're the most wonderful thing to happen to education in this province since Egerton Ryerson. What are the facts? What are the facts in particular when it comes to post-secondary education? Here are the facts: There are 10 provinces in Canada, 10 provinces that have university systems. Guess which one has the lowest government financial support measured on a per capita basis? Is it Newfoundland? Is it Prince Edward Island? Is it those miserly Conservatives out in Alberta? Is it Manitoba? No. The province that has the lowest level of financial support for its university system, based on a per capita system, is the McGuinty Liberals in Ontario. The people who go around pretending to be holier than thou, more

moral than the most moral, who want to lecture everyone in education, have the worst record on the funding of post-secondary education in Canada.

But we're lectured by the McGuinty government that we live in an international world and we should think internationally, so let's compare ourselves to the United States. Do you know that when you include four-year universities in the United States, the McGuinty government's record on funding post-secondary universities would be almost at the bottom in the United States? You might be able to find a state like Alabama or like Mississippi that has a worse record, but you're digging pretty deep there; you're getting right down to the bottom of the well.

May I suggest that the real reason the McGuinty government wants this passed with no debate, no discussion, no questions, no examination is because of their own abysmal record? The government that goes around holier than thou, lecturing people about education, has failed miserably to fund post-secondary education in Ontario. That is the reality, and that is what McGuinty Liberals are trying to cover up here today.

But that's not the only thing that's happening here. There is much more. The government says that they really care about the students. Many of the people who are out there on the picket line, who have been trying to bargain a better collective agreement, are students. Some of them are students who put in four years of undergraduate, two years at a master's degree, three years working on their Ph.D. They've racked up debts. Thanks to the McGuinty government habit of jacking tuition fees through the roof, they've racked up student loans like something you've never seen, like something you can't imagine. These are the very people—they are students. You think they don't want to pursue their studies? You think they don't want to be able to move on? But here's the reality that they face: They are limited, very limited, in their income. Many of them live below the poverty line. Some of them are working very hard doing contract work in the university for less than \$10,000 a year. Some others who have responsibilities, such as teaching, that would rival a full professor's responsibilities are being paid \$17,000 a year. For God's sake, they're living below the poverty line. They are taking on more and more responsibility, and they are living below the poverty line. Does the McGuinty government care about them? They are students. They've invested years in their education. Does the McGuinty government care about them? Obviously not.

I would say that the McGuinty government's care for university students is very superficial at best. It amounts to a headline, and that's about it. How else could you see a sorry situation where after five years their funding of post-secondary education is among the worst in North America? How else could you have graduate students, how else could you have contract teachers, living on salaries below the poverty line? It's a government that continues to talk the game but a government that continues to neglect its responsibilities.



I think there's something more that the McGuinty government wants to avoid. Here we have Bob Drummond, the dean of arts at York University, who confirmed just a couple of weeks ago that York University, as professors retire, is by and large not replacing those professors with new professors. No; because it is short of funding, it goes to the very folks who are the subject of this legislation, the people who have been trying to bargain a better contract, and it says to them, "You take on more responsibility. You teach more classes. You do more supervision. You do more marking. You take on more responsibility." But is there any job security? No. Is there a significant increase in pay? No. A benefit package? No. I think most Ontarians would be shocked and appalled to learn this. That's why we need to have this debate and this discussion, so that people across Ontario will learn the real facts about what's going on in Ontario's universities.

1440

I think there's something else the Liberals want to cover up in this. York University is not alone. York University is not some anomaly. It's not some anomaly where this is only happening at York and it's not happening elsewhere. Go to Carleton. Go to the University of Ottawa. Go to Trent. Go to the University of Toronto. Go to McMaster. Go to Brock. Go to Laurier. Go to Windsor. The situation is happening in university after university across this province.

The only people who think this is good for the university system are the McGuinty Liberals. They think it's so good that we shouldn't even debate this and discuss it. They think it's so wonderful that we should just shut up and behave like automatons and pass this piece of legislation. Let me say, I don't think having one of the worst-funded university systems in North America is good for the students, is good for the workers, is good for the university, is good for the economic future of Ontario. I don't think it's good. McGuinty Liberals may think it is; I don't think it's good.

What's happening at York is going to happen in very short order in other universities in Ontario. I think the people of Ontario need to know that. I know the McGuinty Liberals are desperate for people not to know this, but I think people ought to know it. The government that goes around lecturing people about education has our university system on the wrong road, and the more we go down that road, the more trouble we're going to have. I think people need to know that.

But there are some other things that the McGuinty Liberals want to hide as well, and that's why they are so panic-stricken about avoiding any debate and any discussion. When these students were out of the classroom for 30 days, did the McGuinty Liberals find anything urgent? Any panic? No. When they were out of the classroom for 60 days, did they see any panic or any urgency? No. It's only when they introduce their legislation that suddenly they see panic. Why? Because they don't want their own flimsy record analyzed. They do not want people to see this.

I have a few things that I think need to go on the record. I think we need to understand fully what is happening here. At York and in other universities, as I say, as professors retire in Ontario, those professors are by and large not being replaced by the appointment of new professors. More and more of the work at our universities is being done by part-time, temporary, on-call, contract workers. Here at York, the situation is such. These workers that the government wants to point fingers at and say that they are irresponsible and they're terrible; these workers who are working for under \$17,000 a year; these workers, some of whom are working for under \$10,000 a year—these workers now do 54% of the teaching at York University. They do the lion's share of the teaching. Do you know what they get of the university's budget? Less than 7.5%.

As far as I know, teaching is supposed to be a big part of university. Yes, there's research. These folks also do some research. But as far as I know, teaching is supposed to be a big share of what universities do—teaching young minds. These folks do 54% of the work, yet the McGuinty government says they should settle for less than 7.5% of the budget. I think any reasonable person in Ontario, any reasonable person, if they reflected on this, has to ask the question, "Where is the McGuinty government's head? Where is their dedication to post-secondary education? Where is their thoughtfulness in all of this?"

That's part of what the McGuinty government is trying to hide. That's why this debate is so urgent that you pass it now. Shut off your brain, turn off any sense you have of being a responsible legislator and just behave like an automaton, because the McGuinty Liberals don't want these facts known out there in the public.

There's something else that needs to be examined, and I think it needs to be examined carefully. There's another Liberal government. It's in British Columbia. It advertises itself as a progressive government, just like this one does, but it runs around doing the same things: chopping up collective agreements, cutting health care workers, cutting funding to universities. And they got the bright idea back in early 2000 that they would just take an axe to health care funding in British Columbia. They introduced legislation which would totally scrap collective agreements, which denied all kinds of workers' rights, cut the hearts out of budgets, and said, "This is going to be fine." Except, some of the workers, just as these workers, had the gumption and the courage to stand up to that government and ask some questions.

In fact, they actually had the gumption to go to the Supreme Court of Canada and ask the questions. Here's what the Supreme Court of Canada said—it's a well-known decision now, and it's a decision that I would urge all members of the McGuinty government to read. Rather than turning off your brains, acting like automatons and pretending that everything has to be passed without examination and without thought, I'd actually urge you to read the decision which originated out of British Columbia and dealt with the Liberal government there, because you may find yourself, in very short order, folks, having



to answer some of the same questions that that Liberal government was forced to answer, questions which they couldn't answer to the satisfaction of the Supreme Court of Canada.

As I said, the case arose out of the Liberal government in BC's decision that they were going to take the axe to the rights of unionized health care workers in that province. They drafted Bill 29, the Health and Social Services Delivery Improvement Act—sounds like the kind of title the McGuinty Liberals would give to a piece of legislation that attacks the rights of workers. It gutted health care workers' collective agreements and placed limits on the union's future ability to re-establish rights lost through the unilateral government action. As I said, the workers challenged that, and they had the courage to actually take it to the Supreme Court of Canada. The Supreme Court of Canada, after they heard the arguments, made a very important decision. The decision was this: the Supreme Court of Canada recognized that workers coming together to negotiate their terms and conditions of employment has a long history in Canadian labour relations. The Supreme Court of Canada said that this needs to be protected; it needs the protection of the Charter of Rights. The Supreme Court of Canada set out some criteria under which governments could impose binding arbitration, or governments could impose legislation which abridges or otherwise interferes with those rights.

Here's what the Supreme Court said. It said that governments might be permitted to interfere with the collective bargaining process "on an exceptional and typically temporary basis, in situations, for example, involving essential services, vital state administration, clear deadlocks and national crisis."

Do we have a national crisis here? I don't think so. Do we have an essential service? Is this an essential service where somebody might be denied health care, or somebody might be denied something which would have an immediate effect on their life—dire consequences, life or death? I don't think you could make that argument. Is this a vital state administration? If it's vital, why has the state in effect transferred the administration off to other bodies, colleges and universities which are supposed to decide a number of these matters themselves? I don't think that.

1450

The only thing this government could hang its hat on when it introduced this legislation was something they called "deadlock," which is why the very same McGuinty Liberal members who want to shut off their brains and tell the rest of us to shut off our brains and don't ask any questions, don't examine, don't think and don't give any answers, constantly repeat "deadlock, deadlock, deadlock," like the child who believes that if you repeat something long enough, it might become true.

One of our jobs is to examine what these McGuinty Liberals call deadlock, because there is some interesting history to the bargaining that went on here. The McGuinty Liberals say, "Oh, the kids have been out of the

classroom for 77 days." That's true, and I have a lot of sympathy for those students, some of whom are members of the union and some of whom are not. I have sympathy for both. Having been a former university student, like most of us in this Legislature, and having kids of my own who will be going to university in the not-too-distant future, I understand that.

But I think the McGuinty government is trying to cover up some things on behalf of the university. Yes, the students have been out 77 days. But do you know how many days the university actually went to the bargaining table to bargain, to try to reach a settlement? Did they go half the days? Did they go 35 days? Did they go 30 days, 25 days, 20 days, a third of the time? Did they go 15 days? No, the university was so interested in getting a collective agreement, they were so interested in getting the students back into the classroom, that they wouldn't meet on more than 12 occasions. On no more than 12 occasions would they meet.

In the last week, the university insisted on a vote on their offer. The workers voted; they voted democratically. They said, "No, this offer is not good. We turn it down." The workers prepared a counter-offer. Do you know what the university said? "We're not going to look at it. We're not going to bargain. We're not even prepared to discuss it." Does that sound like a university that wants to get the students back in the classroom? Does that sound like deadlock? No, what it sounds like is a university that is saying, "We're not going to bargain."

Let me give you another example. We left here before Christmas. There was about a three-week break in the university schedule over Christmas before they'd return to class—the last exams; ample opportunity to bargain. Was York University willing to bargain during those three weeks over the so-called winter break? Lots of opportunity: three clear weeks. Was the university willing to bargain? No.

They tell us, and the McGuinty Liberals tell us, that it is absolutely essential to get these students back to the classroom today. They had three weeks, the end of December, the beginning of January, where they could have, should have been bargaining and they wouldn't do it. And where were the McGuinty Liberals? Were the McGuinty Liberals calling up the York University administration, saying, "You'd better get to the table, and you'd better work within Ontario's labour relations system and try to find a collective agreement"? No. The McGuinty Liberals weren't doing anything either.

This isn't deadlock. This is a university that decided, "We'll lock out the students. We'll put them in the street. We'll go through the motions of making it look like we're interested in bargaining and we'll just string it out, string it out, and then we'll go to the McGuinty government and ask them to end it."

I don't think that kind of conduct on behalf of an employer should be rewarded. I think that rewarding that conduct by passing this kind of legislation without any examination, without any thought, without asking any questions, does a disservice not only to the students at



York University but it does a disservice, potentially, to university students and college students at every institution in Ontario. It does a disservice, potentially, to all workers who work in the broader public sector.

I have never seen a situation where one party, for three weeks, says, "We don't want to bargain," where one party says, after their offer has been voted down, "We refuse to respond. We refuse to look at anything else. We refuse to bargain." The McGuinty Liberals say this is deadlock. The McGuinty Liberals sent in—they tried to make it sound as if this guy is the latest coming of Christ—Mr. Pearson as their mediation person. But even he said, when he talked to the union, "I can't get a response from the university. It's almost as if the university is playing for time, waiting and hoping and asking that the McGuinty government will legislate this." Does that sound like deadlock to you? No, that sounds like the York University administration saying, "Wink, wink, nudge, nudge, we're not going to bargain, but we'll go through the appearance. Wink, wink, nudge, nudge, we want the McGuinty government to put an end to this collective bargaining nonsense, to put an end to negotiation and just legislate—and do it quick so that nobody asks any questions." That's what it looks like and sounds like to me.

I have to say, I don't have the hard evidence of that now, but I think we're going to have an opportunity over the next few days to inquire into some of this.

I am not prepared to play a part in that kind of kangaroo court process. And do you know what? If I were a member of the McGuinty Liberal government, I wouldn't play a part in it either. I'd be asking some questions of your own government about this because, let me tell you, if this is challenged in court and they do an examination of when bargaining was conducted and when bargaining wasn't conducted, and the court finds that this is a sham process, each and every one of you is going to wear the embarrassment on your head. You're not elected to come here and be a trained seal. You're not elected to come here and say, "Aye, aye, sir; five bags full, sir. How high do I jump, sir?" You're elected to come here and ask questions. You're elected to come here and demand answers. You're elected to come here and exercise some thought. You're elected to come here and be responsible to the people of Ontario. So far, from what I've seen in this, there are a lot of questions that need to be asked and there are a lot of answers that need to be provided.

Coming here as you have and saying, "Oh, the NDP is holding this up"—what have I have done to hold it up? I'm simply asking what I hope are some thoughtful questions. We haven't rung any bells. I remember Liberals who used to ring the bells. I remember Liberals who used to engage in every kind of nefarious delay tactic. We're simply asking the kinds of thoughtful questions that should be part of democratic debate in a democratic society, yet Liberals are so full of scorn for that.

Be careful, my friends. Be careful, because this may all come back on you.

I want to—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** You want to talk about Bob Rae. Why are Liberals so mean to Bob Rae? My God, he's a Liberal. He always was a Liberal. I know that. Why are you so mean to one of your own? He's doing exactly what you want him to do. I never understand why these Liberals are so mean to their friend Bob Rae. Why do they criticize him? Why do they say that everything Bob Rae, that well-known Liberal, did was wrong? My, my, my. These Liberals have no loyalty.

Again, this is about the students and the workers who are caught in this situation.

I want to speak a little more broadly, because what's happening here at York is also happening at other universities. What it amounts to is this: It is really about the degradation of the work that these people do. As I said, much of this work, 20 years ago, would have been done by full university professors. They would have been paid well, they'd have a pension plan and they'd have some job security and they'd have other things which attach to the job. But as those professors retire, the work is now being put upon contract workers—these workers. Do they have a pension? No. Do they have job security? No. Do they have much of a benefit package? No. Do they have much in terms of wages? No. You know what this almost sounds like? It almost sounds like the McGuinty Liberals want to introduce Wal-Mart to Ontario's university system: have them work for less, have them work with no job security, have them work without pensions, have them work without benefits, and then say to the world, "We have a wonderful university system."

1500

Let me tell you, the last time I checked, Wal-Mart was being sued to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars in the United States for denying workers their rights—immigrant workers; taking advantage of new Americans. The Supreme Court of the United States has ordered Wal-Mart to pay hundreds of millions of dollars in damages for that kind of work concept. But if I look at what's happening today in Ontario under the McGuinty Liberals, it's not much different in Ontario's university system: no pension, no benefits, no job security, low wages. And the McGuinty Liberals say it's wonderful, that this is a wonderful system.

Let me say that this kind of degradation of work that is being done in our universities is not good for the students, it's not good for the workers, it's not good for universities like York University, it's not good for Ontario and it's not good for Ontario's economic future. This is a bad road to be on; a very bad road to be on.

I say to other workers across Ontario who are facing the same kind of scenario, workers who have struggled hard to create jobs that pay reasonably well, that have some security to them: Watch out, because what the McGuinty government has in mind for these workers at York University—you may not be far behind. You may not be very far behind at all. So we can call this the casualization of labour, the devaluation of labour.



But I want people to think a minute—I hear the Premier's speeches where he waxes on about the knowledge economy. Yes, we live in a knowledge economy, but these are knowledge workers: They teach; they think; they criticize; they analyze; they synthesize; they formulate; they conceptualize. These are knowledge workers. Is this your future for knowledge workers: low pay, no benefits, no job security, and by the way, if you have the temerity to stand up and say, "This isn't fair," we'll simply legislate you back to work? Is this your future for knowledge workers in Ontario under the McGuinty Liberals?

I don't think we're going to see one Liberal get up and speak, so I can only assume from their silence that they don't have anything to say in this debate. They don't have anything to say on these points. I invite McGuinty Liberals to take part in this debate, to take part in this discussion.

There's another piece to this. Ontario now has the second-highest tuition fees in all of Canada. If the projections are correct, Ontario is very soon going to have the highest tuition fees in all of Canada. So there's something terribly out of whack here; terribly out of whack. Once again, I think the people of Ontario ought to know this. I think the people of Ontario, in fact, ought to be concerned about this.

I say again, the reason the McGuinty Liberals are so panic-stricken to have this legislation passed with no thought, no examination, no questions, no answers, is that they don't want people to have this discussion. They don't want people to know what is really going on in Ontario's universities.

But there is more, there is much more, and I want people to have a picture of what is, in fact, going on. As I said earlier, Bob Drummond, who is the dean of arts at York University, has confirmed that as faculty retire, as professors retire, they are not being replaced by other full-time professors. More and more of their work is being placed on the shoulders of these contract workers, these contract workers that the McGuinty government, one way or another over the past few days, has started out to vilify.

But it's more than that. I want to read from an Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations—OCUFA—report entitled *A Failing Grade: Ontario's Treatment of Post-Secondary Education Is Falling Behind Its Global Competitors*. Here's what they have to say, and I'm quoting here, Speaker, because I think this needs to be on the record:

"Currently Ontario universities are addressing their budget crunches by hiring a high proportion of faculty on short-term contracts—more than half of new faculty hires—who, in spite of their ability and dedication, cannot hope to give students the continuity, and the research opportunities, that tenure-stream faculty can."

Further, this report recommends that "The government must commit to raising Ontario's support for universities to the national average," citing an additional \$125 per person per year in operating and capital investment, or

\$1.6 billion every year for the next three years. They say that such an investment "would allow Ontario to hire the 11,000 full-time professors that it needs by 2009-2010"—unless I'm mistaken, we are just about to enter fiscal year 2009-10—"to keep up with enrolment and ensure internationally competitive student-faculty ratios. Increasing the number of faculty would also reduce class sizes, and provide more student-faculty interaction."

As I said, that's not me; this is, in effect, the collective university faculty speaking. This is their analysis of what needs to happen.

Are we debating that here today? Is that what this bill is about? No. That's not what this bill is about. This bill is about ramrodding some workers, who happen also to be students, back to work and denying them their right to bargain for better pay, better working conditions and some job security.

There are some other pieces of this bill that I think we need to look at, because we did have a chance to speak to some of the folks who were here watching today about what they were able to negotiate, and I want the government to know what they were able to negotiate. In fact, despite the university's attempts at avoiding bargaining, despite the university's refusal to bargain for three weeks over the Christmas or winter break, despite the university's refusal to bargain over the last week, these workers had been able to agree on some things. Local 3903 had reduced its demands to four items. The workers were prepared to accept the administration's salary increase offer, most of the major benefit articles had been agreed to, and the local was prepared to negotiate and move on the remaining two issues. So even there, when you're making headway towards a collective agreement, how could the government call this deadlock? The only appearance of deadlock here is simply the university's refusal to bargain further. How can you have unilateral deadlock in our collective bargaining system?

The union dropped their salary demands from 9.4% to 8.3% over two years. In fact, the union was prepared to say, "Wages and salaries are no longer the issue; we recognize we have probably gone as far as we can in terms of that." But the union did want to talk about ensuring that some of those professors who retired were, in fact, replaced by other professors. The union wanted eight tenure conversions in year one and seven tenure conversions in year two. I think that's a good thing. If you're having full-time professors retire, why wouldn't you want full-time professors replaced by full-time professors? What is the university afraid of? What's the McGuinty government afraid of? York said they're willing to create 17 five-year contract positions over three years. The union said that this is inadequate since there are already 67 contract faculty members with more than 10 years of experience. Imagine that. Some of these workers have essentially been doing the work of full-time professors for over 10 years and still have minimal job security and very low pay. It seems to me that these are real issues. These are real issues, and the university refused to bargain them. The university said, "Well,



we're not going to talk about this anymore. We're refusing to talk about it."

1510

The union asked for guaranteed funding for graduate students. York graduate students currently can earn \$17,000 per year in wages and scholarships, which is below the poverty line. The union is asking for a huge increase: \$19,000. I'm not sure that would bring you above the poverty line, but it would make a meaningful difference. No, in fact it wouldn't bring you above the poverty line, because the poverty line in Toronto is \$22,000.

Due to rising tuition and crippling debt, as many as 50% of the grad students in some grad programs are forced to leave before they can get their Ph.D. That's what's happening here. They're good students, they're dedicated students—they're also dedicated teaching assistants—but they simply can't afford to continue. They were simply trying to bargain something that would allow them to continue as students, but under the current system, they're forced to drop out. They simply don't have the financial wherewithal. Imagine. The university refused to bargain this.

This doesn't sound like deadlock to me; this sounds like a university that is just not prepared to engage in a realistic discussion about the real issues that are happening under its very nose.

The union wanted some improvements in benefits. In fact, there has been some improvement on that front. The union felt that they had pretty much achieved what they could live with on that front.

I think that by any reasonable person's review of this—any reasonable, objective person looking at what was going on here would find it pretty hard to say that there was a deadlock. In fact, there was, in some cases, an attempt by the university to avoid bargaining for three weeks over Christmas, to avoid bargaining over the last week and to avoid a collective agreement. I think there's potentially evidence of the university failing to act in good faith, which, as we know, is an offence under Ontario's labour relations law. Failing to act in good faith cannot ever be termed a deadlock, which is what this government hangs its hat on in this legislation.

There, again, are some other issues that I want to raise because I think they are important. I've heard McGuinty government members suddenly, just in the last day, suddenly talk about "Oh, the poor students." I didn't hear them say that three days ago. I didn't hear them say that five days ago, 10 days ago, 15 days ago. It's as if, all of a sudden, somebody wrote the members of the McGuinty Liberal government a speech and said, "Repeat it, repeat it, repeat it." Where was this concern? Where were members of the McGuinty Liberal government when the university refused to bargain for three weeks over the Christmas winter break? Where were they? Where was the McGuinty government when the university refused to go to the bargaining table over the last week and refused to reply to the counter-offer that these workers, who are also students, put on the table? Where did this sudden

concern come from when it wasn't evident over the Christmas break and it wasn't evident a week ago?

As I said, I don't think there's any real concern here at all. This is a government that's interested in avoiding having its own sorry record put to analysis, and it's a government that wants to avoid having the university's refusal to bargain put to analysis. If this government really wants to see the students back in the classroom, this government should get on the phone today to the president of the university and say to the president of the university, "Get back to the bargaining table. Get back to the bargaining table and do what you should have been doing all this week and what you should have been doing for the three weeks over the Christmas break."

I said earlier that members of our caucus have students who are at university. Members of our caucus have young people at home who have just finished their university course of study and have the debts to prove it. Members of our caucus have students in high school who, within the next year or so, are going to be going to university. So when the McGuinty Liberals say, "Oh, only the McGuinty Liberals care about the students"—please. Please. We all know that being a university student in Ontario today is a difficult undertaking. It's expensive; it involves a lot of hard work; it involves a lot of sacrifice. I have great empathy for these students. I think, in fact, the university, by its conduct, has victimized the students and victimized the workers. Workers are not getting a fair deal, and students who have been out of the classroom for 77 days aren't getting a fair deal either. But I do not think that is an excuse for members of the Legislature to come here and to turn off their brains, to ask no questions, to give no examination of the legislation and to give no examination of the facts.

I have great empathy for those students. I know what it's like to have to pay off student debts. I know what it's like not to be certain of your future. But I also want to say to the students that today is important, but where this government is headed in terms of post-secondary education, the consistent and persistent underfunding of post-secondary education, the loss of full-time professors and more and more reliance on contract workers who are underpaid and with no job security, means that not only are we in difficult straits today, but this is going to become more difficult as we go down the road over the next weeks and months ahead.

One of the other members said that contract teachers, contract workers, at the University of Toronto are also bargaining and could be in a strike position. That's true. They're facing many of the same working conditions that these workers at York are facing. I've talked with people at other universities who acknowledge the same thing, that it's only a matter of time when their collective agreement is up, when they've had a chance to bargain further. This is not just about concern for these students today; it's a concern about where the university system in Ontario is headed in the short term, the medium term and the long term, because the more you look at what is happening here, it's not getting better; it's getting worse, and the prospects are getting worse.



I also have sympathy for the parents. As somebody who's trying to save right now for our own kids to attend university, I know the size of the undertaking and the commitment that has to be made. As someone who came from a working-class family where my father—I was the oldest of three kids—made it very clear to me early on, "There's not enough money in the household to put you through university, and you're going to have to look after that yourself," I have a lot of empathy for those parents. I understand what they are going through. But let me tell you that the phony crocodile tears that we've seen in this place over the last day or so are not going to help those parents and those students, either in the short run or in the long run. These are very phony crocodile tears and this is very, if I may, phony positioning by the McGuinty Liberal government.

Some have said, "Oh, you know, you can just have a legislated collective agreement and it will be fine." I heard the Deputy Premier, in his usual hyperbole, today say, "The NDP was willing to legislate transit workers back to work four or five months ago." Well, four or five months ago we spoke with both the TTC management and union representatives, who said to us very clearly, "We've accomplished all we can accomplish at the bargaining table. We do need the help of a mediator-arbitrator and we're prepared to go through a binding arbitration process."

1520

That was the situation then. That is not the situation today. The workers have expressed over and over again their willingness to bargain. Their latest offer was a series of givebacks, a series of things that they were prepared to make concessions on to York University. This is not a case where the workers have said, "We can't make any further headway at the bargaining table." This is a case of a university administration that has avoided bargaining from the beginning and avoided bargaining over the last week. It has made it clear that it doesn't want to bargain. That's the difference.

I just say to members of the McGuinty Liberal government that one of the reasons this legislation is a bad idea is that, if you think you can simply legislate these workers back to work, if you think you can continue the trend line that has been set up over the last few years, where they take on more and more responsibility but work for substandard wages, with no job security and very little in the way of benefits, if you think you can continue that, let me tell you that I think the workplace will be more difficult than ever. Even though these workers love to teach—they love to teach; they love being in the classroom; for them this is a labour of love—do you really want to poison the workplace atmosphere by doing this? I don't think you do. I think the eventual results will be much, much worse.

This brings me to another question. Throughout this whole process, not once did I hear the Premier or the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities say in any public way that he wanted the administration of York University to get to the bargaining table and to use its

best efforts to arrive at a collective agreement. I saw the McGuinty government, all fall, try to pretend that this was not an issue. I saw the university avoid bargaining for the three weeks over the Christmas break. Not once did I hear the Premier or the Deputy Premier or the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities give any sort of public indication to the university administration that it was important for them to go to the bargaining table and work out a negotiated collective agreement. And so the result: We have the mediator, appointed by the Premier at the last moment, who tells the union collective bargaining committee that he can't get a response from the university administration. It almost seems as if the university administration is waiting for the McGuinty government to legislate an end to collective bargaining. How could this be? How could this be by a government that says, at least, that it believes in collective bargaining?

I just want to emphasize again, in the little bit of time that's remaining, because I know some people watch this on television and sometimes they don't tune in until the end, a couple of the points I made. The first basic point is this: Our job in this Legislature is to be thoughtful. Our job is to ask questions. Our job is to examine the facts. Yet we've been met with a McGuinty government here over the last two days that insists we should all turn off our brains, we should ask no questions, we should not examine the facts, we should engage in no thought, and at no time should we demand any answers. I say to people, why is the government panic-stricken all of a sudden? What are they trying to hide from? What are they trying to avoid? I want people to understand very clearly that part of what the McGuinty government is trying to avoid is their own sorry record, their own failure to adequately fund post-secondary education in the province of Ontario.

There are 10 provinces in Canada. Ontario, under the McGuinty Liberals, ranks last—10th out of all the provinces in government financial support for the university system when measured on a per capita basis. Not only that, but if you make an international comparison and include the United States, the McGuinty government would rank next to last in North America in terms of government financial support for post-secondary education as measured on a per capita basis. If you look at other comparators, the university system in Ontario ranks last in Canada in terms of the faculty-student ratio. The university system in Ontario, if you again make the international comparison, ranks near the bottom if you include peer-level American universities in this comparison. And that's part of the reason why the McGuinty government has tried so hard to avoid any debate, any discussion with respect to this bill, because, as the president of the York University students' association said when he was asked, "Who do you think is the biggest culprit here?" he was quick to say, "The McGuinty government, for failing to adequately fund my university."

The second thing that I think the McGuinty government wants to avoid in introducing this legislation: This



government is very nervous that it cannot meet the test set out by the Supreme Court of Canada for the interference in collective bargaining. It knows that it can't hang its hat on essential service; it can't hang its hat on national urgency; it knows that it can't hang its hat on one of the other criteria, so it's trying to hang its hat on deadlock. That's why you hear the McGuinty Liberal members, almost as if they've been trained as robots, repeat the words, "Deadlock, deadlock, deadlock, deadlock, deadlock"—because they hope if they say it often enough, it might become true. But when you examine the facts, it's very difficult to make out the case of deadlock.

The university refused to bargain. In the three weeks over Christmas, they just refused to bargain. That doesn't sound like deadlock; it sounds like one of the parties doesn't want to reach a collective agreement. In the week leading up to this Legislature being here today, the university refused to bargain. That doesn't sound like deadlock; it sounds like one of the parties doesn't want to take part in collective bargaining. It is a unilateral decision. It is trying to avoid the collective bargaining process. I think that's why this government expresses almost panic and urgency when it speaks to the press and when any of the members of this government say anything about this issue: They don't want their own sorry record of underfunding post-secondary education examined, and by God they don't want anyone to look at York University's sorry and deplorable behaviour in terms of their avoidance of collective bargaining and their attempt to refuse to bargain any further. Because I think members of this government know that their efforts at establishing deadlock, deadlock, deadlock are flimsy at best.

So I would not be surprised if, in the next couple of days, we see an announcement from lawyers representing these workers and other workers that they're prepared to challenge the constitutional viability and the constitutional basis of this legislation.

I urge all members of the McGuinty Liberal government—I know your training as seals has progressed now for five years. I know you have been told to say nothing—"Don't participate in the debate, don't ask any questions, don't examine the facts, don't demand any answers"—but I would urge you to do just that. I don't think you want to wind up where the Liberal government in BC ended up: having to admit that they had breached the constitutional rights of hundreds if not thousands of workers, having to admit that they were going to have to make financial and other reparation for their breach of constitutional rights. That is why we raise these issues.

1530

We're not going to engage in any bell-ringing. We're not going to engage in any kind of process that is designed to waste time around here. We're going to ask these questions, and we have many more questions to ask. They're questions that need to be asked, because at the end of the day this is certainly about these workers and these students, but the implications also apply to other workers and other students within the Ontario

university system and, ultimately, probably apply as well to any workers who work within the broader public sector in Ontario.

So there needs to be thoughtful examination. There needs to be an asking of tough questions. There needs to be an examination of the facts. Most of all, we need to have some real answers from the government other than the repeated rhetoric of "deadlock, deadlock, deadlock, deadlock."

I know that many other members of our caucus want to speak to this legislation. I'm even hopeful that we might see some members of the McGuinty Liberal caucus stand and speak to this legislation. I'm even hopeful we might hear one of them ask a thoughtful question about this legislation.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Dave Levac:** While I don't agree with the characterization of the member opposite, I do look forward to voting on this bill as soon as we possibly can. I appreciate that.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I listened intently for the whole hour, because I think this is an important issue. The leader of the third party made a cogent and clear case. He cited examples; he cited pieces of Health Services and Support versus the BC government. He asked the question—and I'm still waiting to hear this, because when I listened intently as well to the Minister of Labour when he stood here and talked and tried to make the case about the clear and present deadlock that was there, he never once made the case for where that exists. I've heard what the leader of the third party has to say, and he has made a compelling case.

Really, what I'm asking, in the absence of anything from the minister, is for one of the people, particularly one of the members of the executive committee of government, to stand up and outline for this House where that clear deadlock exists. What made you come to the conclusion that it exists? Was there somebody—was it Mr. Pearson, who seems to have said something contrary—who says it exists? Was it someone from the university who says it exists? Where is it? Where is it? Because this whole bill will not be legal unless it meets that test. Someone, surely, has to stand up in this House to defend where that deadlock is. It's not enough to say that there is one. Where has it come from? Who says it's there? What proof is there that a deadlock exists?

If there is other information to show that it conforms, then I think that we have an obligation to hear it not only on this side of the House, but on your side of the House. The people of Ontario have an obligation to hear where that deadlock is, because in the absence of the deadlock, this bill cannot be constitutional. This bill will trample on the rights of citizens, and it ought not to do so.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Pat Hoy:** Like my colleague from Brant, I look forward to voting on this bill as soon as possible.



**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Deadlock, deadlock, deadlock, deadlock, deadlock, deadlock: How many more times do I have to say it? Do you know how I know it's deadlocked, I say to the leader of the third party? Because I've been there and you haven't.

Let's vote on this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Response? Response?

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** There have been four questions and comments already. It's now time for a response.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I want to thank my colleagues for those learned comments. I found them very enlightening. I think, in listening to the comments of my colleagues, they illustrate exactly the points I was trying to make. The McGuinty Liberals insist that members should come to the Legislature and park our brains at the doorstep: ask no questions, examine no facts, engage in no debate, and not require any answers. To my colleague for the Conservatives—and I appreciate his philosophical position—I'd just have to say to him that repeating the words "deadlock, deadlock, deadlock, deadlock" does not make it so. I can give you other examples of that, where people have protested their innocence over and over and over again and it has not made it so. Conrad Black might appreciate your repetition of his case, but I don't think it's going to get him out of jail.

We engage in this debate because this is serious legislation. These are serious times, these are serious issues, and these are serious questions that need to be asked. Frankly, I find it objectionable that the McGuinty government simply wants to ratchet up the rhetoric that somehow this is a panic situation and there should be no examination, there should be no thought, there should be no questions asked, there should be no examination of the facts and there should be no answers demanded. I think that is an injustice not only to the workers and the students, but to the people of the province.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** This not only may well be, but I am confident is, the single most important debate that has occurred in this chamber since this government's re-election in 2007. It's a debate that has been ill-attended both by government members, who are in a majority caucus and who determine what happens in this chamber, how quickly it happens and when it happens—and I should make it very clear at the outset that I don't feel I have to distinguish myself from my Conservative colleagues. We come from two very different ideological perspectives. There's a huge ideological gulf, and I understand the positioning that they have taken on this issue. Indeed, Mr. Shurman, in December, before this House rose for the Christmas break, was telling this government, "Get on with it. Introduce back-to-work legislation." And indeed the government knew, because Mr.

McGuinty has had occasion to indicate, that the New Democrats were not going to acquiesce and let this type of legislation with respect to the York University workers pass without due process in this chamber.

It is the single most important debate why? Because collective bargaining, free collective bargaining, is the hallmark of a democratic society. The right to withdraw one's labour is critical in a democratic society, and it's with great pleasure that I've witnessed the jurisprudence, the Supreme Court of Canada acknowledging that collective bargaining as a right which is protected by the Canadian Constitution, by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Let's also make this other oh-so-simple observation: The best settlements, the best resolutions, are negotiated settlements, negotiated resolutions. They are the ones that have the greatest likelihood of surviving. They are the ones that have the greatest likelihood of cultivating and nurturing a mature and positive relationship between workers and management. It should be a rare day when workers are forced into a third-party decision-making process about the things that they want to be able to negotiate at the bargaining table.

1540

I want to say this about CUPE and its members and I could say it about any worker: No worker wants to go on strike. In the case of these workers, again, some of our brightest people in this province, their passion is academia, research, mentoring and teaching. They've made great personal sacrifices so they can be doing that, as compared, in many cases I'm sure, to being out there making some interesting amounts of money in what's left of the private sector in this province. No workers, least of all York workers, want to be on a picket line.

Again, these CUPE members, these trade unionists as well as workers, understand what it means to negotiate. They know what it means to sit down and identify problems and then brainstorm and find joint collective solutions. They know that doing that sometimes means to concede certain things. You generate that give and take, and these workers, through their bargaining team, have done precisely that.

It is shameful, the scarce number of days that York University management has spent at that bargaining table—some of the highest-priced help in the province, with salary and benefits packages to the tune of darn near half a million a year. I presume they're educated people in their own right, and I presume, perhaps inappropriately, that they're people who understand that their actions are designed to have certain consequences. The actions of York University management sure as heck weren't designed to reach a negotiated solution. Indeed, Mr. Pearson, the government's most senior labour mediator, reported back that he was left with the very clear impression—and he's nobody's fool; make no mistake about that—that York management wasn't really interested in negotiating resolution, that they were simply waiting for back-to-work legislation.

Mr. McGuinty, the Premier, in a rare moment of excessive language, as has been noted by members of the



press, talked about sending Mr. Pearson up to York campus to “knock some heads together.” Well, isn’t it clear that what Mr. McGuinty should have been doing was getting on the phone and using his clout, amongst other things, as the major funder of York or any other university or community college, and telling the president of York University, “Quit playing games. Get into the bargaining room with CUPE’s representatives and stay there as long as it damn well takes until you reach a resolution?”

I certainly know parties who are involved in disputes and who reach difficult stages. I also know that you don’t resolve the difficult stages by walking away. You sit down and you hammer things out, and York University has failed to do it.

By the way—and I hope this isn’t held against York—I’m a graduate of York University and the law school there from many, many years ago. So I have a fondness, quite frankly. I was there when it was a small campus surrounded by farmers’ fields, when, if you missed the last bus after an evening down at—what’s that tavern on Bloor Street, on the south side? If you missed the last bus, you walked home in some very cold, slushy weather from Yonge Street all the way over to Keele. So I have some very personal fondness for the university. I’ve had occasion to take courses up there any number of times since graduating many, many years ago. As recently as a couple of years ago, I was up there on that campus taking some courses. I know the people who are teaching, the TAs, the sessional professors—is that correct?—the contract professors. You’ve heard that they’re doing over 50% of the teaching work and being paid—please—grossly substandard salaries.

Salaries are about sustaining yourself, supporting and feeding yourself and your kids and your spouse, but they’re also about dignity, aren’t they? Aren’t they also about indicating one’s value? As I say, these are some the brightest people in our province, these M.A. and Ph.D. students. Substandard wages are about poverty and about forcing some of these people out of their graduate programs because they can’t afford to do it anymore. It is also about recognizing one’s value.

I think that students—and on that, I don’t know about this language about “kids.” These aren’t kids; these are young women and men who are students, and some old women and men—some not-so-young ones, I’m sorry—who are students up at York or its satellite campus. They’re not kids. They don’t need recess. They don’t have lunchroom monitors. They’re not taken by the hand to the bathroom after they ask for permission. They’re young women and men and some not-so-young women and men, and again, very bright in their own right, and eager; eager to work academically.

Is a work stoppage a painful process? Of course it is. It’s painful for the workers; it’s painful for the consumers. In the private sector, they’d be consumers; in the public sector, students. But I say that the real loser here, and this is so tragic, is York University, because York University has established a reputation now as a univer-

sity that has very bad labour relations, as a university that doesn’t treat its staff with dignity or respect. The message is clear because, you see, when you negotiate at the bargaining table, as I say, that’s an agreement that’s far more likely to be kept, and not just according to the letter but also be kept in spirit. When decisions are imposed upon people, that’s far less likely to happen. So it’s a university that is going to leave young students fearful, because of its bad labour relations, of completing their year in the normal academic year. It’s a regrettable thing. York’s not the only university to go to in this province, but it hasn’t served itself well at all.

One would think that of all the places in the world it would be a university senate that would want to sit down with its president and say, “Let’s demonstrate to the world that we are the leader in labour relations and that students at this school on this campus have got the most committed staff, because they’re staff who can bargain collective agreements when the time comes due, and this is the campus where there is the least likelihood of a work stoppage.” I’ve got to tell you, this strike looks far more like a lockout than it does a strike. It’s a lockout via the back door, if you will.

Do you know one of the other interesting things? Some of the courses I have taken at York are around dispute resolution. York University holds itself out as a leader in dispute resolution.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Wow.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** It does. Osgoode has a wonderful master’s program in dispute resolution. As professors and TAs at York and Osgoode, you’ve got some of the leaders in dispute resolution and negotiation, don’t you? Obviously, the president didn’t take any of those courses, and he might have been well advised, even now, to maybe audit a couple. I’m sure there are professors there who would be more than pleased to tutor him or at the very least lend him some of the literature.

**1550**

The most important debate since this government’s re-election, the most important single debate, because workers are under attack in this province and in this country—globalization: How do you like it so far? Capitalism: Has it been good to you, too? Workers are under attack. Workers are under attack by globalization. Workers are under attack by privatization forces in the public sector, by a mania for partnerships, which really means corporate ownership not just of the building and the logo, but almost inevitably of the content of the curriculum. That’s scary stuff. It’s scary to me.

The disdain for workers, the perspective and the attitude of, “Well, you should be happy with what you’re getting; you’re lucky you even have a job,” I find a very sordid trend. The message that’s being cultivated, the spin about these workers in their fight, their struggle, is that somehow they’re a bunch of spoiled dilettantes who should be grateful rather than being interested in exercising fundamental collective bargaining rights. So I have no regrets or shame about standing here opposing back-to-work legislation and telling this government that



New Democrats are doing our job when we subject this bill to the minimum of due process here in this Legislature.

There is a reason for the historical first, second and third reading of legislation. It's so that there can be studied and reflective consideration of the bill and what it does and what it means. I've got to tell you, this bill has implications far beyond ordering workers back to their workplace; far beyond that. This bill is very much about post-secondary education, its quality, and its quality is determined by the level of funding.

The province of Ontario, number 10 out of 10 provinces—give me all the guff you want about percentage increases; the fact is, you're still in 10th spot. It's about quality post-secondary education. It's about collective bargaining, because this government has sent the message loud and clear, at least to the college and university sector, which it insists on underfunding, "Don't worry, because when you have disputes around developing a new contract, we'll just order the buggers back to work—solution." I don't buy that kind of attitude; I don't buy that kind of perspective. Workers in this province and in this country have struggled too hard for too long and shed too much blood—we have, indeed, reached the top of a mountain with a Charter of Rights that embraces and guarantees collective bargaining—for us to abandon that or undermine it now.

I suspect that because of the procedural tactics that the government is using—and, God bless, I have no qualms about that; I enjoy procedural tactics—this thing may wrap up, oh, give or take, Thursday. But I am so proud of Howard Hampton and my NDP colleagues for having subjected this agenda to the lens of workers, the lens of students, the lens of fair-minded people and the lens of commitment by young academics to academic excellence here in Ontario and across this country.

New Democrats will not be supporting this legislation. We can't block it. We can't defeat it. I would love—and probably the most effective thing Mr. McGuinty could do would be to announce tomorrow morning, "You know what? Let's go home for a week while I make that phone call to the president of York University, because I, Mr. McGuinty, know that a negotiated agreement is a stronger one and a healthier one. It's simply better policy and it will make for a stronger university." I am fearful that that is but a passing fantasy on my part.

So I tell you: I applaud the students, those who have, in fact, stood with their teachers, with their teaching assistants, their sessional professors, and those who have withstood the university management's intransigence around this matter. I applaud their families for trying as hard as they can to understand what the real issues are here, no matter how difficult it's been for everybody—except, it appears, for the president, because he knew back-to-work legislation was coming, didn't he? I get the feeling that he slept well at night knowing that, "No sense worrying, because I've got Mr. McGuinty on my side with back-to-work legislation." Because Mr. McGuinty—I don't know. Somehow he supported collective

bargaining last week, but there was, on that road, a transformation. I don't know what his new name is. Last week Mr. McGuinty supported collective bargaining; as of Sunday, somehow he didn't. I don't know whether it was like going to the refrigerator early on Sunday morning, you take a gulp of milk out of the carton and it's sour and you want to vomit—whether that's the sort of thing that acted as a catalyst to cause him to do this 180-degree turn. I don't know how it happened. I'd be fascinated to read the case study.

We oppose this legislation—it's bad policy, friends; it's the wrong thing to do and it sends the wrong message—and we'll continue to do that.

Thank you kindly, ma'am.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I'd like to thank the member from Welland for a fine, fine presentation. I think, now that we've fairly much heard everything, we should get to a vote on this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I also would like to commend my colleague from Welland for a fine presentation, and I don't think we should rush into a vote just so people can get out of here. I think this has to be debated. I think it has to continue to be debated. I think that people are running away from the issue; they don't want to touch it with a 10-foot pole. "Let's get it over with and let's go home."

Well, we don't feel that way. We have depth. We think about things. We make the proper decision. We don't just follow the wand. We, as a party, have the ability to decipher, to think about things and to come back with the proper and the moralistic answer and the right thing to do.

I have sat in this House and watched things go on in the last year and a half that have simply amazed me. Bills that fall on the floor at committee level don't even get read. Once again, I'd like to reiterate: I have supported nine Liberal bills when it's been for the good of the people of Ontario. I have supported nine. You have supported none from us. I can't say they have either. So all I can say is this: You say, "Let's work as a team." Well, let's also represent people.

Would anyone in this House deny people the ability to negotiate? Would anyone deny the rights of a collective agreement? You say, "No; we respect collective agreements." The Conservatives say, "We respect collective agreements." Nonsense. You wouldn't be doing what you're doing if you respected collective agreements. What are we doing—putting us back to 1932, when there were no unions, no rights to negotiate? What are we doing? Are we going backwards? I believe we are. And I think this is the poster child for universities that's going to go on throughout this province in the next few years. They want to crush the rights of these people, TAs and people working in universities: the right to strike, the right to have the ability to negotiate to have a decent living.



What do we have here at these universities? Are these boards dictators who are making half a million or a million a year and telling some person with a degree and an MA and—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Thank you.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** —working on their Ph.D to work for less than \$20,000? Unbelievable.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** I certainly, along with many of my colleagues, look forward to the vote on this particular bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Questions and comments? The member for Richmond Hill.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I'm Thornhill; he's Richmond Hill.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Thornhill; sorry.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Thank you, Speaker.

I believe the member from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek should probably introduce an act called Collective Bargaining Until Hell Freezes Over Act, 2009, but we won't talk about that today. Let's just get on with the vote.

1600

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Response?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I've been around here a little while. I was skinny when I got elected and I had colour in my hair, but I am just distressed when an issue so important is being discussed when there are people out there across Ontario who have such a strong interest in that discussion—people from any number of perspectives. I acknowledge that.

I don't know whether the majority of Ontarians support the NDP view on this matter or not. Quite frankly, it's one of those things where that should not be determinative, because I know that there are a whole lot of people New Democrats are speaking for, and we speak as much for those generations of workers who struggled so hard, so long—many died—to build a free, collective bargaining regime here in this province and in this country.

I just find it somewhat distressing that there is a trivialization of the issue by people who use the two-minute questions-and-comments slot to rather cheekily say, "Let's get on with it. Let's get on with it." No. Let's have thorough consideration of it. As I say, it can't go on forever. We know that. I expect this thing will wrap on Thursday morning. But there seems to be a marked trivialization of the issue by people who stand and say, "Well, that's it. Let's get on with it." Is that a genuine fulfillment of the responsibilities that a quite well-paid member of the provincial Legislature—is that how they should be fulfilling their responsibilities? Again, many will disagree, but I say no, and I'm saddened by that; I truly am.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Further debate?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I am standing to speak to this bill because I think it needs to be spoken to, and I must state at the outset: I am saddened that there is so little debate coming from other parties.

I want to preface my remarks by two statements of things that I hold to be self-evident and absolutely important. The first was that for a brief time in my life, back in the 1970s, I was a teaching assistant, not at York University but at Carleton University. I was there and it was a rewarding and wonderful experience, but it was also a very difficult job. It was not a job that paid very much money, but I understand why people want to get into it. The imparting of knowledge to students—and some of them were older than me because I taught a class to civil servants; some were younger—was an exciting thing in my life. I take my hat off to those people at York University who work under very difficult circumstances for very low wages. We need to support what they are doing.

The second thing I hold self-evident is the 20 years that I have spent in government, both in municipal government and for the last seven-plus years here. In all that period of time I have felt and I have honoured what I think is the most important part of life in Canada, and it is not what goes on in this Legislature, as important as it is. The thing that distinguishes us in this country, the thing that distinguishes us in this province is the rule of law. It is governments and Legislatures doing things in accordance with the law of the country. It is having the ability to look at decisions that have come before us, political decisions that have been made and, most importantly, court decisions that impact upon our actions.

As a mayor, one of the most difficult things I had to do was to bypass and go beyond what the laws were and the official plan in the borough of East York when the Muslim community wanted to have a mosque. I remember on one occasion quoting the Constitution. I hold that Constitution very dear to my heart, and I think all Canadians should. The Constitution sets out the rights and privileges of the people of this country, and we ought never to trample on those—ought never to trample on them—without grave cause. That grave cause is set out in section 1, and a government has to show that there is some national emergency or something else in order to do it. This government has not shown anything today in the four minutes from the minister and not anything from the five- or 10-second hits that have been given by the members of why they are prepared to take away the constitutional rights of the workers at York University. I ask the members opposite, particularly the government members—you all read the newspapers. There's a little line that I like to read once in a while. It's in the *Globe and Mail* in the "Comments" section—it's always on the editorial page—and it says, "The subject who is truly loyal to the chief magistrate will neither advise nor submit to arbitrary measures." They print that every single day, and I think we as legislators should look at



that. It's quoted from Junius. It's there every day. We should not submit to arbitrary measures. I have asked, and I will repeatedly ask: What is the government's position? Where is the evidence of the clear deadlock? Without evidence of a clear deadlock, this is an arbitrary measure that breaches the Constitution. I ask that question at the outset, before I make any other statement. If someone has that clear deadlock, if you can show evidence of that which is sustainable in a court, and this may in fact be challenged in a court, please present it to me and to this Legislature. If you present it to me, I am willing to look at it, I am willing to consider it and I would even be willing, perhaps, to change my opinion if it is in fact there. I have yet to hear a single sentence setting that out.

The case in point, the Supreme Court of Canada in the case of the Health Services and Support versus the British Columbia government, and they ruled against the British Columbia government on a very similar action based on the government's "failure to comply with the duty to consult and bargain in good faith" and it "should not be lightly found, and should be clearly supported on the record." That's what they said. It had to be clearly supported on the record. You couldn't just lightly take it away. I haven't heard it clearly supported on the record. I ask again and again: Please, somebody from the government benches, particularly the Premier or one of the members of the executive council, stand up and clearly set for the record what it is, because I haven't heard it and I haven't heard it from any of the backbenchers.

The government did, however—and I read Bill 145 through twice; it's not a long bill—clearly they set out their own preamble and they use the identical words of the Health Services and Support versus BC decision. They used the identical words, as set out in the court, to carefully craft that there was somehow a clear deadlock. I have to think that that is the only case they have. When I put the question to the minister after his four minutes, it was clear he wasn't relying on any of the other factors. Other than the clear deadlock, there is nothing else in the Supreme Court decision which will benefit this government or this bill.

The decision that the Supreme Court rendered declared collective bargaining as a constitutional right. They went further to state that it was a fundamental freedom and not a modern right, which the BC government had intended and tried to convince them of. But in fact, the right to collective bargaining predated Confederation in Canada and was much older than that, as it existed both in Britain and Europe.

The government negotiator whom this government sent in, Mr. Pearson, clearly pointed out that it was the university's failure to bargain that was the problem here. It wasn't that the workers were failing but that the university was unwilling or unable, or just simply thought they were going to bide time and they were not prepared to collectively bargain. This is a unilateral deadlock if ever there was one. This is not a clear deadlock; this is a unilateral deadlock. I want to quote Mr. Pearson. He said,

"Everything I've seen has been not quite there, and frankly they"—meaning York University—"are not prepared to move out of their ballpark. That could be because they're waiting for government to fix the problem"—Reg Pearson. That's what he had to say, and if that is all that the government has to rely on, then I don't think a case has been made for clear deadlock.

1610

The Supreme Court stated further in the decision that reasonable alternatives have to be found before a government can make a move like they're making here. They set out the reasonable alternatives that could have been suggested in British Columbia. I'm not sure that they are all applicable here, but the government does have an obligation under law to look at those reasonable alternatives. Was it reasonable to send the negotiator for a longer period of time? Was it reasonable to have the minister or the Premier come in and try to use their good offices to some avail? Was it reasonable to offer the university additional funds or monies in order to accommodate it? Was it reasonable to sit down with the union and find out why they were not happy and see whether something else could be accommodated? All of these things have to be tried, if you follow the Supreme Court of Canada decision; not a single one of these things was tried. Where is the evidence of this government that you acted in accordance with the law? Where is the evidence that you did anything that the Supreme Court demands?

As recently as last week, while reading the paper, I saw Mr. McGuinty unwilling to trample on those rights for precisely these reasons. The Premier said, "No, it cannot be done for precisely these reasons." Please tell me what happened in the last few days that has changed the mind of the Premier and of this government that you can now unilaterally take this action.

The Supreme Court said, as well, in the decision, "The record discloses no consideration by the government of whether it could reach its goal by less intrusive measures, and virtually no consultation with unions...." They stated that as the reason for turning over the government bill in British Columbia. If that was the reason there, it is clearly, in my view, a reason here. Where is the proof that this government has done anything? I want the students to go back to school, too. I want the workers to get a good agreement too. I want York University to flower and to grow too. We all want the same things, but the question is, how do we get there? Is the only way to get there, in the government's mind, to unilaterally abrogate and rip up the constitutional rights of the people who work at York University? I find it hard to believe that that is the only alternative.

This is a comment, first of all, before the Supreme Court: "This was an important and significant piece of labour legislation. It had the potential to affect the rights of employees dramatically and unusually. Yet it was adopted with full knowledge that the unions were strongly opposed to many of the provisions, and without consideration of alternative ways to achieve the government objective, and without explanation of the government's choices."



Then it goes on, in this comment, to actually quote the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court states: "We conclude that the government has not shown that the act minimally impaired the employees' s. 2(d) right of collective bargaining. It is unnecessary to consider the proportionality between the pressing and substantial government objectives and the means adopted by the law to achieve these objectives. We find that the offending provisions of the act (ss. 6(2), 6(4) and 9) cannot be justified as reasonable limits under s. 1 of the charter and are therefore unconstitutional."

This was the opinion of the learned judges of the Supreme Court. This is the test that this government is going to have to meet if it goes to court. This is also the test of this government in this Legislature. You are asking for all-party approval; you are asking for us to support legislation which may indeed be flawed; you are saying, "Trust us and vote for our legislation," without having even given it to us until this morning; you are asking us to take that leap of faith, when the minister will not stand up and defend his bill. You are asking us to support it when not one person on the government side of the House will name even one iota of evidence that you have done what is required of you as a government in this land to meet the Constitution.

Clearly, I think this bill is probably illegal. We will be forcing back these workers—because I agree with my colleague Mr. Kormos from the riding of Welland that the government has the legislative muscle and the votes necessary to push this bill through, probably on Wednesday or Thursday, and that's precisely what's going to happen. But if it happens and if it is illegal, and I believe it is, this is going to be so toxic. This is going to be so bad for York University; this is going to be so bad for every other university. This is going to be so bad for every public sector union and every quasi-public sector union, that a government could come in and ram this through contrary to the Constitution. In the end, it's going to be very harmful for Ontario.

For some 20 years before I became a full-time politician, I was a worker for the federal government. I worked in the Department of Employment and Immigration. I was involved in the union. I was counsel to the Minister of Employment and Immigration before the Immigration and Refugee Board here in Ontario, as well as in Quebec, British Columbia and the Maritimes.

I fully understand what governments do, and I also understand how badly they sometimes do it. I remember back in 1991 when I, as a federal civil servant, and some 100,000 of us across Canada who had the right to strike walked out when the government of the day, the Mulroney government, offered us zero and zero. We struck because we didn't think zero and zero in a two-year agreement was a very good offer, particularly since inflation was running at 4% or 5% at that time and particularly because we didn't think we were earning enough money for the kinds of work that we had to do and the difficulties of that job. We struck, and after two weeks the Parliament of Canada ordered us back to work

with zero and zero. They abrogated all of our rights and imposed a collective agreement which was substantially different and worse than the one that we had struck. They didn't listen to anything we had to say.

I want to speak to the members opposite. The poisoned relationship between the civil servants of Canada and the government of Canada exists to this day. It exists to this day not only for the government of Brian Mulroney, although he certainly suffered in the next election when I'm sure every single civil servant in Canada voted against him and reduced that once-mighty party to two seats. It continues to this very day, when civil servants are very mindful of their rights and very free to go to court to protect them.

We have here a situation where an arbitrator-mediator is going to be appointed. I looked through the act, and I read it several times to make sure what the authority of that arbitrator-mediator is and how that may not benefit, and probably will not benefit, the workers who have been on strike these 11 long weeks, because section 15 sets out the conditions that the arbitrator must be aware of.

The first one is for the employer's ability to pay. So therefore, if York University says, "We don't have any money," the arbitrator can't do anything.

The second one is the reduction of services, so that if York University turns around and says, "Yes, we're prepared to give you a little more money" or some tenure or something else that you're asking for or some dental benefits for your kids, the arbitrator can say, "Fine, you can have that," but at the cost of how many people being laid off? Because that's the second thing: the reduction of services.

The third thing is that the arbitrator has to look at the economic situation, and I'm sure this is where the government will come in and cry that they don't have any money to help the universities and that the budget that's coming down in February or March is not conducive.

The fourth thing is the comparison with the public and private sectors and how much money they're getting, and I suppose that since the private sector is running around a 2% settlement, that's what they're going to try to do there.

Finally, last but not least, is the university's ability to attract and retain qualified personnel. I'm sure they're going to have something to say about that during the arbitration-mediation process. So everything that these workers have fought for, everything they have stood for, everything they have dreamed of is going to be put at risk because it is stacked. No wonder they don't want it. No wonder they're here and hoping against hope that this government will do the legal and right thing. I have yet to see any evidence of that. It is despairing: 20 years as an elected politician; 20 years trying to follow the rules of this country, trying to look at the jurisprudence and how it fits into governance; 20 years of upholding the Constitution as the best saviour to all of the people of this country and the best saviour particularly of minority rights and those who are seeking redress, to see it all dashed away for expediency.



1620

I know we have some excellent members on the other side. I know we have a university law professor sitting on the front bench. Surely to God one of them can stand up and can be clear on what the clear deadlock is so that all of this is justifiable. Surely one of them will do that. Surely one of them will offer an iota of evidence that will justify this action. I haven't seen it. I have to tell you, it is despairing to me. I know there are people out there who want the kids back to work and, as I said, I want them back, but the longer this goes on and the longer people start to report—and I hope the press is looking at this. There is really no foundation for this action. There is nothing that will be sustainable in the courts in the long term, and therefore this is an empty piece of legislation. It will do far more harm than good if this is struck down. It will do far more harm, as it did in British Columbia, and it will harm not only the workers at York University, not only the school system, not only the university system, but in the end, the integrity of this wonderful institution that we love to be in, and that is this Legislature.

I thank you very much for your time, Madam Speaker, and for those who have listened intently without heckling me at all.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** This bill is about students and returning to class, and I look forward to voting and supporting this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** I appreciate the member's comments; I do indeed. I think it's regrettable, though, that the strategy by the NDP, the third party in this place, has detracted from the responsibility of the Liberal government with respect to the situation we find ourselves in today and the fact that in the neighbourhood of 50,000 students have been unable to attend school for a significant period of time.

I criticize the government as well for not consulting with both opposition parties. I think this could have been handled in a way that did not continue to hurt students at York. Through negotiations with the various House leaders, we could have had an extended one-day session to midnight, for example, on Sunday. The NDP could have put their points on the record, their concerns on the record during that one-day session, voted against the legislation and made their position eminently clear to those who share their perspective on this, and we would not have gone on to continue to punish the students.

I'm saying, all you're accomplishing by what you're doing here today is simply extending the challenges and difficulties for the students and their families; not accomplishing anything more than that. Your position could have been done in an extended session on Monday. I share the view of others that we should get on with this. Let's not further the pain of these students and their families.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Questions and comments?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and given that it's my first time talking to you, I will wish you a happy new year.

My colleague talked about constitutional rights to bargain. I come from Sudbury. Sudbury is known as a labour town. If you have any type of business of more than five or six employees, you are unionized. People understand their rights to unionize, they understand their rights to bargain and they understand that those are part of our basic constitutional rights as residents of Ontario and as Canadians.

Of course, when a union and its members decide to go on strike, it has an effect on people—in this case, on 50,000 university students.

As the NDP, we value education, and we want to make sure that the education being delivered in our universities is of top quality and that the degrees that our universities give out have a lot of meaning. We understand that people work really hard to get those degrees, and they are deserving. But the people who teach those students also have to be rewarded for the hard work that they do. In order for that to happen, you bargain; you bargain for a new collective agreement. This is how the process works. This is what our constitutional rights tell us we have. It's easy to chastise other countries that don't respect rights—sorry; too long?

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Thank you. Questions and comments? The member for—I can't remember.

**Interjection:** Oak Ridges–Markham.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** The member for Oak Ridges–Markham.

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. On behalf of the York University students from my riding, I look forward to voting on this bill as soon as possible.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Response? The member for Beaches–East York.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** First of all, to my two colleagues, the one from Oakville and the one from—

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** Oak Ridges–Markham.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** —Oak Ridges–Markham: They look forward to voting on the bill as soon as possible, and I am sure, with the clout of the Liberal Party and the government in this Legislature, you'll get your wish in a day or two. Okay. All right. I'm sure that that's going to happen. Thank you for your comment. You will get what you want, we're sure.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Leave your weekends clear.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Yes. My colleague from Leeds–Grenville made a statement that he doesn't want to further hurt students. I think nothing could be further from my mind or the minds of anyone in this room, that we are out here to hurt students. We are here to help the students. We wish them all the best in their university studies. We want to make sure that they have a university to go to which is not poisoned, where it is an opportunity for them to study and an opportunity for them to work



along with graduate students and others who will help them in their studies and who want to help them and who will.

But we also have to look—and this is something I haven't heard from my colleagues elsewhere, other than in the New Democratic Party—at the constitutionality of this bill. Does everyone accept the constitutionality of the bill? Has anyone from the other parties read the Supreme Court decision? Does everyone accept that there is a clear deadlock that would necessitate this action? I have not heard that from another speaker. I have not heard it from anyone.

I would simply remind them that we are a people of laws. We make laws in this Legislature, but they must be in accordance with the Constitution. They must be in accordance with the laws and the decisions that have been set out by the Supreme Court of Canada. To do less than that is to do a disservice to the people of this province.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Further debate?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I'd just like to start off by saying that, on a personal note, I worked in a steel plant for over 30 years as a tradesperson, and I, to get ahead, to get decent wages, to get decent benefits, walked the picket line. At one point in one of the strikes, we were out for almost six months. I almost lost my house. I missed a few mortgage payments. I had to borrow from my parents to get by, to feed my three daughters.

All three of my daughters have finished post-secondary. One is now working towards becoming a nurse practitioner as we speak. I had a discussion with her. She said, "Dad, I'm going to be first joining the RNs' nursing society"—that's a union—"and then I will be going as a nurse practitioner." She said, "You know, if you hadn't fought for me for better wages, if you hadn't given us a decent living and the ability to go to post-secondary education through your hard work and your fight, through your union experiences, to get better wages, I wouldn't be here today." She said, "God bless what you're doing."

Those university students one day are going to leave that university and a lot of them may join the Public Service Alliance; they may join other unions. I would ask them: 20 years from now or 25 years from now, when someone comes to stomp on their rights as union members, how will they react? I'm sure they're going to say, "I'm with my union. I'll walk that picket line. I'm not going to be pushed around." I'll bet you, if they were honest, every one of those 50,000 kids, if they joined a union, would react that way 20 years, 10 years, 15 years from now.

1630

Sometimes you've got to stand up and fight. Sometimes you've got to stand up for what's right. We're the only party in this House that's doing the right thing. It's going to come back to haunt the Liberals through legislation and through law. It's going to come back to haunt the Conservatives. Every one of them has stood up and

said, "I want to vote on the bill." Boy, what a debate. What an exchange of ideas. What a real concern about the other guy. It takes two to fight. It takes two to negotiate. If you don't go to the table, you can't solve it. That university executive won't go to the table. Twelve days out of—what?—eleven weeks; that is disgusting.

I remember the days when our unions used to fight. We'd be in there 24 hours a day, all weekend; they'd bring lunches in; you couldn't go home and see your wife because you were negotiating, trying to come to a deal. I remember those days. Is it now going to be a rubber stamp, back to work? Slave wages, no benefits, no future. What a great society we're headed for. Sorry; I don't want to be part of it.

I'm not going to give up my views, my life. I fought I don't know how many fights for unions. I've negotiated against governments; I've gone to Ottawa; I've gone lobbying; I've gone fighting for—we went back one time for 25 cents an hour. We were out for five months; the company was pounding us. We went back for a quarter. But you know what? We didn't give in and we got our quarter an hour. It wasn't what we wanted, but we at least got something out of them. They would have taken it away if they could have.

So what are we going to do here? Are we taking away the bargaining rights of unions in this province? Are we taking away the ability to better our lives? Are we creating dictatorships? Are we creating corporate giants like what's going on in the States? These guys are flying around in \$20-million planes and they're telling some poor guy on the assembly line, "Take a \$3-an-hour cut or we're going to close your plant and move to Mexico." Wow.

Where are we headed? Have the people in this room got their heads in the sand? We're in an economic crisis; we're in a world crisis; we're in a global crisis. NAFTA stinks. Globalization isn't all it's cracked up to be. Our universities, our kids—sure, why has the enrolment gone up in universities? Because the kids can't get jobs; they can't get good-paying jobs. If you can't get a job, you go back to school and try to get more education so you can get a decent job. What do they do when you go to get more education? They slap you on the head and say, "Here's \$20,000"—below poverty. It's unbelievable that you just don't get it.

Now, we've jotted down a few notes. New Democrats share in the concerns of students and parents. I had three daughters who went through post-secondary education, so it's not like none of us are parents who don't have kids who were in university. It's not like the big, bad NDP is doing the wrong thing here. Many of us are parents, and we understand the frustration. We have been speaking to students who are anxious and upset, and with workers, many of whom are students too, maintaining their resolve for a fair resolution. We want to see students and academic workers back to teaching and learning.

We're not short-sighted in this. We're looking to what kind of campuses and classrooms they're being returned to. Can you imagine the animosity in those rooms? Let's



face it: We're human. You're going to go back there and you're going to give it all, teaching these kids, after the university has screwed you? You're going to go back and do your best to share all the knowledge you've gained? I'm not sure that's going to happen. If you've got a bad atmosphere on the campus and if you've got people begrudgingly going to work for slave wages, I'm not quite sure what kind of quality of education those kids are going to get at York.

We want to ensure that the place the students return to, the climate, is one conducive to learning; that any year salvaged now is one of high calibre, not a secondary, begrudging, poor-morale type of atmosphere. Our concerns are not limited to the implications on the academic year alone but, beyond that, on the quality of education in Ontario for generations to come. We want students and academic workers to return to the campus and the classroom as soon as possible, to the kind of place where teaching and learning are done at the highest quality, in the best environment. A negotiated settlement is the only way to avoid the toxic environment that is created when a settlement is imposed on workers. Adequate funding to the post-secondary education system that is desperately required is the only way to ensure quality, accessible higher learning.

This current dispute boils down one primary cause: this so-called education Premier's inaction: the unwillingness to encourage the employer, the university, to get to the bargaining table seriously; the refusal to address the deteriorating state of post-secondary education in our province, last—last—in per capita funding nationally, with the second-highest tuition fees and skyrocketing debt. Something's not working, folks. Maybe we should be taking a closer look at it.

The fact is aptly demonstrated by the increasingly popular strategy of hiring casual or part-time workers to do the same work as tenured faculty but for a lot less pay and less job security as a cost-saving measure, only serving to degrade the quality of education in Ontario. These instructors are stretched to the limit.

In the best interests of students, parents and academic workers, we cannot agree with this back-to-work legislation. We do not support such contempt for the collective bargaining process. Only a negotiated settlement can hope to address salary, job security, benefits and other issues unique to preserving the integrity of post-secondary instruction. It is still not too late for this to happen. Premier McGuinty still has the opportunity to step up to the plate, tell the university administration to get to the table and fulfill their obligation at the bargaining table.

Twelve, 13 days out of 11 weeks of serious negotiation, and I'm not quite sure it was serious: That's unbelievable. We used to go for weeks on end until it was done, 24 hours a day. We brought in our dinners, brought in our lunches, worked all weekend, didn't see our wives for a couple of weeks at a time, but we hammered out an agreement. We didn't just come into the Legislature and say, "We've had enough. The press is

pressuring us. The students' families are pressuring us. We're just going to do what's popular. We're not going to talk it out. We're not going to see how close the two sides really were. We're just going to accept the fact that it's not working. Our top guy went in"—gee, I think he was there about two days, not really a big effort: two days to try to get them together. I think he's just going through the motions, to be honest with you. He came back: "Nothing I can do." He's their top negotiator; he's done all kinds of contracts all around Ontario. Two days and he gave up? I don't know about that.

Post-secondary spending in the Liberal and NDP platforms: There is one item that must be made absolutely apparent. There was an assertion by the Acting Premier today that somehow the NDP 2007 platform only had \$200 million allocated to post-secondary education. This, of course, is anything but the case. In its 2007 platform, the NDP allocated a \$1.1-billion increase to post-secondary education and training to 2007-08 and 2011-12. As to the increase in post-secondary education and training over the same period in the Liberal platform, the corresponding number is \$800 million, a little short of our mark, even though the numbers got twisted today.

Unilateral deadlock: That's an interesting statement—unilateral. You know, I have the opinion that any negotiation, any collective agreement, comes to a deadlock every day, but they talk it out. They go back to the table. They take a break. They yell and scream at each other. They go away, they have a coffee, and they come back until it's civilized.

**1640**

No; it's easier to send it to arbitration. It's easier to get someone that the government picks to hammer out a deal and send them back to work: "If you don't like it, lump it. If you don't like it, we'll replace you with replacement workers; you're history." That's a wonderful way to handle things.

The process of negotiated settlement, when it comes to the collective bargaining process, is an intense one. It can be an incredibly demanding task that requires both parties to act willingly as participants. When there's too much distance between the parties, the back and forth must continue to close the gap. Two days to close the gap? I don't think so.

The York University administration did not bargain in good faith. The inaction of the McGuinty government only sought to exacerbate the crisis created by York's obstructions. They weren't serious. They could have hammered out an agreement weeks ago if they were serious—and the union came back with concessions. Last week there were major concessions on wages, on benefits, and they wouldn't even look at it. They had no intention of settling.

Since the strike began, the York University administration has bargained for less than two weeks, total. In approximately three months, they have scarcely given the pressing issue 12 days of attention. Moreover, the York University administration refused to bargain over the winter holiday. "We've got to have our holidays. We've



got to have our 14 or 16 days off before we get back to the bargaining table." They should have been at the bargaining table right through and hammered out an agreement and gotten these kids back to school, but they didn't.

The university president has been markedly absent and disengaged from the entire process. Maybe he's in the Bahamas; I don't know. I don't know where he is on his \$700,000 or \$600,000 salary, whatever he makes. Some of these grads and teaching assistants work for \$20,000; this guy's making \$500,000 or \$600,000 with a golf membership, driving a brand new car—

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** And a housing allowance.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** And a housing allowance. What's wrong with this picture? But nobody says anything about them. The fat cats are at it again.

Even after the government appointed a mediator and had the union's offer pared down, even after the union local put forward a substantially altered offer and requested repeatedly a return to the bargaining table, the university refused. Maybe he was having a nice drink or something, or a nice dinner in a rich club. I don't know.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** A steelworker bar?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Maybe.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I'm sure there's one somewhere.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Local 3903—those bad union people—had reduced its demand to four items. We were four items away—from all the hundreds of items, four away from an agreement. They were prepared to accept the administration's salary increase. Most of the major benefit articles had been agreed to. The local was prepared to negotiate and move on the remaining two. Did you hear that? The local was prepared to move on the remaining two issues. Well, if you're not at the table and you're not negotiating, I guess you can't be prepared to move. Interesting: the big, bad union. I can't believe it.

The government's own head mediator, Reg Pearson, made it clear to the local that the York administration had no intention of bargaining and were just waiting for legislation—your own guy that you appointed, and you come here today and you're going to go through it anyway, even though the guy you appointed said, "They're playing games." But you're going to do that because you've got public pressure, because you've got media pressure. "The big, bad NDP"? Give me a break.

Everything that I've seen has been not quite there, and quite frankly, they're not prepared to move out of their ballpark and into the real world. It could be because they are waiting for government to fix their problem. "We'll just let the government force them back to work and we won't be the bad guys." But, believe me, if they do force them back to work, it's going to be pretty ugly around that campus for a long time because there are going to be a lot of disgruntled people.

Is this what they want for education? Will it be attractive for students to go to York if they know these staff—who do 51% of the work, by the way, of the teaching—are upset, mad? I don't know. They may have done themselves irreparable damage, for all I know.

In view of this fact, will the Premier not even admit that it was not a deadlock but the unilateral refusal to negotiate on the part of York University administration, a move that might be unwarranted and may be—this is the kicker—illegal? You may be doing something here against the Supreme Court decision in BC. You may be doing something wrong, because if you can't prove that it was a deadlock—and that's the kicker you're using, the technicality. If the union showed goodwill and good-faith bargaining, which I think they did when they were ready to talk every day, not 12 out of 11 weeks—and all the other things that went on, which I can go on about forever, with the stunts the administration pulled. If that is proving good-faith bargaining, I'd like to be the lawyer on that case, because I think I'd have a good chance of winning.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Even a bad lawyer would have a good chance at winning.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Even if I was a bad lawyer, I think I could win.

It's pretty clear, and believe me, folks, it's going to come back to haunt you. We are going to stay steadfast in our belief in negotiations, proper bargaining. We will stick to this as a party, and my leader will stick to this. Believe me, we're taking the hit right now because of popular demand, but by the end of it you'll wish you'd been an NDP member.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Run, Paul.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I'm not running.

The union dropped their salary demands, dropped their benefits. All they wanted was guaranteed funding for graduate students. The union wants to improve some benefits—a little bit of dental, a little bit of this, a little bit of that—that everybody is entitled to in this province usually. So they aren't asking for much, and they get pounded.

All I can say is that going through this process has been really enlightening for me. I think this is just the start of the avalanche. What you're doing here is forcing people back to work when they are in a legal position to strike. They have a negotiated contract, they have the ability to negotiate, and you're forcing them to accept something that they don't want.

The last time I looked, this was a free country. The last time I looked, you still had the ability to fight. The last time I looked, it's not a dictatorship.

Believe me, one day those 50,000 kids will be standing here doing the same thing I'm doing, sticking up for people, if they ever choose this line of work.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** And he or she will be a New Democrat.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** And I hope he or she—thank you—picks the right party, that had the guts, had the will, to stand up and do the right thing and not just follow like sheep down the road and do as they're told.

Once again, all the hands went up—not one detractor, not one person, stood up to debate it from that side.

At least the member from Thornhill talked about it. I give you that, not that I like what you said.

In closing, thank you, and this will continue.



**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** Our students at York University need to be back in their classrooms, and teaching and learning processes and activities need to resume at the university—the sooner, the better. Therefore, I look forward to voting for this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I listened with interest to my colleague from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek. I thank him for the compliment and hope we can get on with the vote shortly.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's very sad, really, for anybody watching this program—and I was watching it from home until I rushed back in—to see the little response on behalf of the Tories and the Liberals.

We are standing here on a matter of principle. This is a matter of dignity for working people in this province. It's a matter of standing for collective bargaining and for the collective bargaining process. It's a matter of standing for students and the right to an education—not just any education, not just a Wal-Mart education, but a good education. Instead of debate, instead of informed discussion, what we have are people collapsing. They simply want to push this legislation through, and that's very, very clear.

1650

I'm so proud of my New Democratic Party colleagues. I'm so proud of democratic socialists in this place who stand up for the rights of workers. I'm so absolutely proud that we come together and that we're the only voice that workers have in this place—the only voice. You know what they say about Liberals? There's an old story—Liberals and principles, that is. They say the Liberal will say, "I've got principles. And if you don't like those, I've got some others." That's the Liberals and that's principles. We know where the Tories stand. We know the Tories stand with management. We know the Tories stand with those who are making over half a million dollars a year and can't be bothered to get off the golf course and come down to bargain. We had better hopes for our Liberal friends in the House. Clearly that's unfounded. Only here, only in the New Democratic Party are you going to get a voice for workers in collective bargaining. Only here, anywhere in the legislative process in this country, in this province, are you going to get a say—with the NDP. So I look forward to saying more about this and more about my poor husband who is also contract faculty at Humber. Let's hope they strike on too.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I'm standing here for students today, and I would like to vote on this bill as soon as possible so they can be back in the classroom.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Response?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Actually, I don't know how to respond, because there's no content. There's nothing there. They just keep saying, "Get on with it. Let's vote." I really don't have an argument. How do you argue with people who stand up and say, "Let's have the vote. Let's have the vote?" Really, I guess I'm arguing with myself. So if I argue with myself, I probably could win. All I can say—this is a short two minutes—is, "Paul, you can do this." The NDP is doing the right thing. And I've got—actually, I have to go for another minute, so I'm going to have to improvise.

I'd like to say that I'm looking forward to one of the other people in this House other than the NDP standing up and actually saying a few words about this. We have a very captive audience that's been sitting through this all day, and bless you for your patience because it's been a one-group show today. The other show is non-existent. They might as well be on a bus home, because all it is is, "Let's get back to what we were doing before we got called back and you aggravated us by calling us back. Now let's get this done and get out of here." Not happening, folks. We're going to aggravate you some more.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Further debate?

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** I want to say on the record how much I appreciate the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek. I think he's been a terrific addition to this assembly. He's full of energy. He's not a very subtle guy, but I appreciate that. I appreciate his frankness and his honesty and his passion about issues. Certainly this is one where we happen to strongly disagree with the view his party is taking with respect to this legislation.

I think the member for Parkdale–High Park summed it up pretty nicely, although she contradicted herself at the outset, talking about lack of participation in the debate. Then later in her comments she said, "We know the positions of every party in this place. We know the Progressive Conservative position on it," and she tried to cast some aspersions upon us at the same time, but we'll let that go by. She mentioned the Liberal Party and, of course, their support of this legislation. We're very critical of the way the Liberal Party has handled this whole issue from the get-go and their failure to consult with the opposition parties on a way to assist in getting out of this very difficult situation.

It's now clear, and that's been substantiated by the member for Parkdale–High Park, that only one party in this House—the NDP—still wants to debate this bill. That party, as you can appreciate, holds 10% of the seats in the Legislature, while the remaining 90% of the seats are held by members who are clearly satisfied with the amount of debate on this crucial issue. The positions of all three parties have been made abundantly clear over the past three days, both in the media and in this assembly. Swift passage of this bill is of urgent importance to at least 50,000 students and their families, as every moment lost to House procedure is a moment lost in education to York University students. I think we in



this place can all agree that these students and their families have lost enough already.

I'm not going to add any more of my own words to hold up passage of the bill other than to say that I move that the question be now put.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Point of order—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** I'd like to deal first with the motion brought forward by the Leader of the Opposition. It is my opinion that the debate has not been sufficiently brought forward. There are other members who wish to speak on this issue, and so, with respect, I will ask that the debate continue.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** With respect, that in fact was my point of order. We saw it the way you have.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Thank you. Further debate?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** No, it's questions and comments.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Sorry; you're correct. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I like the member from Leeds–Grenville, and I've known him for a long, long time. He has very strong Conservative credentials and he also has a history as a strong trade unionist. He was in a leadership role in his particular trade union when he was still a working man.

As has been said before, the Conservatives have been consistent. Mr. Shurman has been calling for back-to-work legislation since December. We disagreed with him then; we disagree now. But the remarkable thing here is that—and it certainly wasn't a road to Jerusalem—last week Mr. McGuinty supported collective bargaining, and something happened. For the life of me—I did remember that tavern on Bloor Street; it's the Brunswick House—as much as Mr. Shurman and the Conservatives have been consistent, Mr. McGuinty's been inconsistent, and that's why there has to be some explaining done. It's the absence of that explanation that is, amongst other things, what irks members like her, my colleague from Parkdale–High Park, and leaves her shaking her head in dismay and bewilderment.

New Democrats are going to speak to this matter. I suspect there will be a couple who will speak to it, and I assume this same bill is going to be called tomorrow afternoon. In the absence of any further speakers—of course, New Democrats haven't used their resources—the bill will go to a vote. We'll be voting against it.

As much as I'm certain that the Conservatives won't change their minds, I'm still hopeful that on that road that he appears to be travelling, Mr. McGuinty may undergo yet another conversion and delight us all.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** To the honourable member: I can take two or three minutes to go through all of the reasons why what the government is doing is wrong. We know that there is movement in bargaining. That's been clearly established. We know clearly that there's a lack of funding. Ontario finds itself number 10 when it comes to funding. I can go on to talk about how even the mediator

who was sent in said, "The deal's been cooked. The government has decided that it was going to use time allocation, so the employer said, 'Let's not get to the bargaining table.'"

But to the point that my friend from Leeds–Grenville makes, which is that somehow or other New Democrats are usurping the rights of students and others in our society: I remind you that we live in a democracy, and we do have the right in a democracy to have full debate on issues that are of public importance.

1700

I remind you that that's something pretty recent. It's not a new thing in the world that we know today, because barely over 100 years ago, women didn't have the right to vote, First Nations didn't have the right to vote and most of the world was under the tyranny of kings and other types of monarchies that didn't allow people—never mind to have a debate, but even to have rights. People through the ages, unfortunately through the first war, the second war and others, have gone out and defended the right to have those democracies.

Yeah, at times democracy is a bit messy: We have debates. And yeah, every now and then, we have elections and they get in the way of people—and yeah, we have some debates in those elections as well, and we bother you with pamphlets on your door and knocking on your door and giving you a call. And on election day, we bother you again to come and vote. But I remind you that we've built up a democracy so that we could make sure that we have the institution of democracy to protect the rights of people.

Yes, students have a right to an education; there's no question. But we need to counterbalance that against the rights for workers to organize and to freely bargain. When members of this assembly make the argument that somehow or other New Democrats are getting in the way, I would just say that we're doing what is democratically our right, and that I will continue to stand for.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I must say that I will not be changing my mind, that I will be supporting this legislation. Forty-five thousand students are without education. I know from hearing from my constituents, many of whom go to York, that they are very concerned about losing their school year. I will be supporting this legislation, and I would like to get on with the vote.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** The member for Oxford.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I, too, want to get up and congratulate my colleague from Leeds–Grenville for a very wise presentation, shall we say.

I think it's been brought up in some of the other comments that in fact we have to continue to debate because we have so many more people within the party who want to speak. But I think debate really requires that the people who are going to speak have something new to add to the cause. I think at this point, if we're all saying the same thing, we don't need to say it too often. So far, I've been



attentively listening to the presentations, and there's very little difference in the comments from the individual members. So I agree with the member from Leeds-Grenville that we should put this to the vote.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Response?

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** I thank all of the members who participated, providing commentary on my comments. I also want to put on the record with respect to the member from Welland that yes, we have known each other for many, many years, and I like him, too.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** We're not having dinner later, though, just in case you're wondering.

I respect the perspective of the NDP with the position they're taking here on a matter of principle. I'm not questioning that this is a matter of principle for that caucus. What I guess I am questioning is the strategy being utilized to deliver that message and to express their concerns with respect to the process that has been undertaken here.

My view of this is that if the Liberal Party, the governing party, had dealt appropriately with the opposition, the House leaders in the opposition parties, had sat down and discussed their tactics, what their intents were, we perhaps could have worked something out differently. I suggested here earlier an extended Sunday sitting so that all members of the NDP who wished to participate could have had an opportunity to put their views on the record ahead of their negative vote—which we know is going to be the case whenever the voting day does arrive—and deliver the same message without further penalizing students at York University. I guess that's the concern that I want to put on the record.

It's unfortunate that the Liberal government once again failed to match their actions with rhetoric in terms of co-operation with the opposition party. It's just another indication of this majority government, the dark side of majority government, with the way this Liberal government has handled this whole process from day one.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I have to say that the opportunity to speak today in this chamber is a privilege. Often I say it's a pleasure, and today it is not a pleasure; it is distinctly not a pleasure.

For those men and women who are students at York University, for those women and men who are teaching assistants who are part of CUPE Local 3903, for parents who were drawn into this, for all who've been part of this conflict, I have to say I've watched it very closely, as my son is a student at York. I saw him idle through the fall. My partner is a prof at York. I have seen what she has gone through, trying to figure out how to make things work, and go at it again, how to make things work, because she respects the strike; she respects all those who work at the university. I know the personal price that people have paid and I know the financial price that

many will pay. So it is not a pleasure to talk about this issue. I wish it weren't here. I wish it didn't have to be here; I wish it had been resolved.

I want to talk about the context within which all of this is happening. Understand it very clearly. For the most part, those who will read a newspaper, who will see a headline—I think the headline I saw in the Star the other day, the Sunday Star, was "NDP to Block End of Strike." It is as if a certain Dalton McGuinty was walking down the street one day, noticed that someone had fallen, and was going over to help them. It is as if this government, this province, had nothing to do with the situation that the people at York—the students, the workers—were encountering, as if he were simply a very helpful bystander who was trying to resolve a conflict in which he had no interest and no history.

I want to say to you all that there's a very different way of understanding the context within which we all find ourselves today. For those of you who have had—I find it hard to call it "fortune," but let me say this for those of you who have had the fortune to be here on the days when the budget is presented and to look at the numbers and to hear the hosannas from the government benches about how finally, finally, paradise has been brought to earth, goodness has been delivered, and in this budget is salvation. In the days that come, we debate that budget. Our critic, Rosario Marchese, in all the time I've been here, has been pointing out the inadequacy of the funding for post-secondary education, for elementary, for secondary, for the whole range. We have made that point consistently. We have voted against their budgets because we know what the outcome is. We know what the outcome is. It is logical, it is consistent, and it is predictable.

So when I hear people on the government benches saying, "Oh, the students," I think, "The alligator can indeed cry; the crocodile can shed tears," because the crocodile for a while has been setting up a situation in which money has not been given to the universities, has not been given to post-secondary education, has not been given to the colleges. Are you surprised? Are you taken aback that there is conflict? Not for a moment. You shouldn't be, because the situation was set up years ago.

We have before us a bill to impose arbitration, to end this strike. Before Christmas, people were hurting at York University: the people who were freezing out on the picket line—and it didn't matter which picket line they were on; they were all cold—the people who were at home, trying to figure out what to do with the time on their hands; the people who were trying to figure out whether they should go back to Calgary or Victoria, whether they should go back overseas and come back, because they didn't know when school would resume. It was a very hard time.

Did this government, in December, rise, speak, and say, "We need to put in someone who is going to bang heads now"? Did they in fact say, "Okay, you know what? We've been making a mistake with post-secondary education. We've been underfunding it. We know it is



critical. We know it is critical and we say, in this case, we're going to put some money in so we can get things sorted out, and then in the next budget we're actually going to start addressing post-secondary education"? I have to tell you, those who have gone through it know that this has been a long, long, long process, but I have to say it was very long before Christmas as well. And yet Mr. McGuinty continued to walk down the street while the fight went on, acting as if he had no history or commitment or responsibilities. No mediator was sent in.

1710

For all those who are watching this debate and asking themselves, "Why is there a debate about this bill? Why are we in this situation?" you need to look at the full range of what is happening in the public services in Ontario. You have to understand that it is not simply post-secondary education that is getting hit. It is not simply post-secondary education that is suffering from neglect. When I talk to friends of mine in public health, when I talk to nurses, people who went through SARS, who watched their colleagues get sick, who were frightened about what would happen in this society if yet one other thing happened—because we don't have the capacity to deal with more than one crisis like that at a time. You talk to them and you ask them, "So what has actually been done to deal with the SARS crisis, since it hit us so hard?" I'll tell you what. Committees have been set up. I'm glad that you all feel comforted to hear that, because if a committee hadn't been set up, then nothing would have happened at all.

We are seeing in this province an ongoing decay of public services, an ongoing reduction in the infrastructure that we depend on, not only for our daily lives but for our future. Are we going to see a future in which we have health care that is adequate? Are we going to see a future where we have a large, educated body of citizens who can take on the challenges of this century? At the rate we're going, probably not, because this is not a government that thinks in those terms. This is a government that tries to manage along and tries to just make sure that things don't break down on their watch or overtly. If they break down, they step in, they take the participant in the conflict who they judge is weakest and they put them to the wall and say, "You're going to suck it up"—which is what they're doing now—"You are going to take a hit, and we're going to continue to underfund post-secondary education."

This is not a strategy for success for a province. This is not a strategy for protection of our hard-won rights in this society. Unionization, the rights to organize and to strike, are human rights. The societies that respect them are societies that have gone through long struggles, struggles to establish the ability of the great mass of people in the society to actually have power to determine their own destiny. So when a government takes a step, as this one has, having set up a situation where people were in an impossible strait, and then said, "Okay, we're going to force the workers in the situation to take a hit," there's no question we're going to respond. There is no question

we must respond, because, in fact, the history of our party and the history in this society is one of people fighting, struggling, taking risks and taking losses in order to give themselves a future.

I want to go into a little bit of detail on the question of funding because I've set the larger context. I've set the context of a government that started this whole process off by aiding and abetting the retention of Ontario's triumphal position of number 10 in terms of post-secondary education funding per capita. It's clear that this government isn't providing adequate funding to post-secondary institutions. I tell you, when you ask questions, you will hear anecdote after anecdote and lists of funding that has been provided. I've heard the minister, when challenged on funding, give us little stories of people who in some way may well have been helped, but when asked about the overall impact, is distraught that we've dismissed the anecdote and says that we are neglecting the human element. Well, that isn't the way to run a ministry, that's not the way to run a government and that's not the way to run a society.

When you add up all the numbers, when you go through all the lists, we're still number 10. And when you're in last place, even fighting to get to the middle is a struggle. I don't even see this government fighting to get to the middle, fighting for some mediocrity. Fight for mediocrity, you guys. It would be a bigger stretch than what you've got now. Go for it.

Ontario has the second-highest tuition in Canada, and we'll likely beat out Nova Scotia. That's an extraordinary reality. Here we are, the industrial centre of Canada, a jurisdiction that is facing tremendous challenges, that faces the risk of a rust-belt future, and where we look at the population of young women and men in this province and we don't see that we have to help them build our future, we see that we're going to impose a burden on them and in many cases either discourage them or put them in impossible debt situations. If we look at student-faculty ratios, we're behind every other province, and we're the worst amongst our American peer institutions.

I have to say I had an opportunity in the 1980s—and not that money flowed then. I was a part-time teacher, part-time faculty, at George Brown College. I remember the experience because, when I calculated my prep time and my classroom time and my marking time, I was making less than the minimum wage that then prevailed, so I got out. I had another job; I stuck with that job. I decided I wasn't going to get into this racket. But I have to say, there are a lot of people you talk to in colleges who are doing that part-time teaching, that part-time faculty role, and that may be what they can get. Many people who graduate from our universities now find that a degree is not getting them what they need to get. They are being forced into those part-time teaching jobs and they are not a happy group. They are not a group facing a bright future; they are facing an ongoing decay of public services, something that is at the heart of what we're debating today.

The Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations talks about how Ontario universities are



dealing with their budget crunches: “by hiring a high proportion of faculty on short-term contracts—more than half of new faculty hires—who, in spite of their ability and dedication, cannot hope to give students the continuity, and the research opportunities, that tenure-stream faculty can.” Well, I would like to suggest to all of you here that if you want to have high-quality education, you don’t consistently downgrade the status of, the resources of, the livelihoods of those who are teaching.

I had an opportunity before Christmas to visit a variety of people, some of whom were teaching assistants at York. They live in my riding. They were not living high off the hog; I can tell that you right now. They were living in small apartments. They were talking to me not about the difficulties they were facing on a day-to-day basis during the strike but the difficulties they faced before the strike and why they, even though they had very little and they were facing a very lean Christmas, were willing to stay out because they would not accept what was being offered to them. You don’t stay out that long if you’re happy. You don’t stay out that long if things are going well. If you’re pushed to the wall then, yes, you will find the reserves within yourself to keep going. But people I met in my riding before Christmas, dealing with the strike, living through the strike, living through the working situation they had to live through, were people who felt they had to fight and they didn’t have a choice. I have to say, I deeply regret the fact that they found themselves in that situation and that I’m deeply appalled at this government for putting them, the students and everyone associated with York through the meat grinder that they’ve been put through.

**1720**

When you look at what’s being put into universities, when you look at the investments that are needed—when you look at OCUFA, they talk about an investment needed to hire 11,000 full-time professors to keep up with enrolment and ensure internationally competitive student-faculty ratios. They call for an increase in the number of faculty to reduce class sizes and provide more student-faculty interaction. We aren’t even talking about that with this government. All that we’re talking about is trying to close the lid on a situation that is boiling over.

When are they going to catch on that calling yourself the education Premier doesn’t make you the education Premier? It just makes you someone who looks like a poser, someone who is aspiring to a role but not actually playing it.

Ask students about their debt. Ask faculty about the number of faculty who have been hired. The number hired across Ontario in 2007-08 was 1,800. That doesn’t meet the number that was required. It doesn’t meet the numbers that are required at York. It also has to be noted, and Howard Hampton spoke about this earlier, that as tenured professors retire from York, tenure-track faculty haven’t been replacing them. I know that some people are getting tenure, but the numbers of those who are getting tenure as compared to those who need it are far too inadequate.

So I’ve talked about the context, the government’s responsibility. I want to talk briefly about the government and its relationship to collective bargaining and its inability, apparently, to respect collective bargaining, whether there’s a Supreme Court decision or a Court of Appeal decision or simply a tradition in this province of having some respect for people’s labour rights.

We shouldn’t be surprised that this legislation is here. We shouldn’t be surprised that when the United Food and Commercial Workers won a court decision from the Ontario Court of Appeal saying that agricultural workers could be organized, this government appealed that to the Supreme Court of Canada. The UFCW was entirely correct, in the press release that it put out, in saying that this government is simply continuing the practices of Mike Harris.

Now we have a Supreme Court ruling on actions in British Columbia. As you read the decision, it’s pretty clear that shutting down collective bargaining is something that is only done in extreme situations. They prescribed those situations. I think the argument has been made very well by my colleagues today that in fact we haven’t seen the proof before us that there was a deadlock.

For those who are at York, in the bargaining unit or as students, they have experienced paralysis. I don’t argue with that. But in fact, was bargaining going on and could bargaining go on? Did the union change its negotiating position and come back with counter-offers? From the documents we’ve seen, yes. Did they moderate their offer in an attempt to come to an agreement? Yes. I don’t know what went on within the senior management at York University. I can’t speak for them. But I do have to speak to this government and say to them: Okay, you’ve made a very substantial decision, and you are asking us to take very substantial action. Where is the evidence? Show us the evidence. Show us that there was no movement by the parties, and if there was no movement on the part of one of them, what did you do to press them to move?

For all of those who have gone through this experience, for all of those who have been hurt by this experience, they need to understand the roots of it. They need to understand why those of us in this party would oppose the action of the government, call them to account, make sure that the arguments were presented in this House so the public in this province knows that it is not just a question of a distant fight that this government is trying to sort out, but in fact it’s a conflict that was set in motion by this government itself.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):**  
Questions and comments?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I want to praise the member from Toronto-Danforth for his eloquent words and his eloquent exposition of the background of this piece of legislation.

I want to use my minute and a bit to talk about Mr. Milloy. I have a great deal of respect for him, the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, and I



know he has been instrumental in this piece of legislation. I want to talk about the cars he drives because I share a parking spot right next to him.

He has a Volvo and a Mercedes. I want to point out that they're both unionized cars. Neither of them are produced by CAW or Canadian union workers. The Volvo comes from a country where there is free post-secondary education. The Mercedes comes from a country where there is free post-secondary education. Both of them are produced by union labour; they're not our union labour but their union labour. If you were a Swede or if you were a German, there would be incentives to buy unionized—

**Hon. John Milloy:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I drive a Chevrolet Impala. Thank you very much.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** That's not a point of order.

Member for Parkdale—High Park.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Someone looking very much like him got out of a Volvo and a Mercedes.

*Interjections.*

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Just to complete my comments—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** I have to say, I've been very impressed with the members for most of the afternoon. We have about 35 minutes left, and I would please ask that we keep a better tone for the next 35 minutes. And remember that reaction is a result of action, and so I would ask all members to be respectful of each other in this chamber, please.

I also want to say to the member for Peterborough: There were other members mingling around, standing up. I didn't notice you, so that's why that happened.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I'll leave some seconds; I'm almost off the clock. Suffice it to say that in those two countries, an 85% unionization rate in Sweden, a comparatively high one in Germany—let's have it for here.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I can tell you for the record that the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities has been driving an Oldsmobile, too, for many, many years. I know that for a fact.

I look forward to voting on this bill.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I'm supporting this bill, and certainly the impression I got from the parents of students in Peterborough riding—and the students themselves have called me since yesterday to support this piece of legislation.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I want to thank the member for Toronto—Danforth.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I don't want to get into the car debate; it really isn't part of this bill.

Anyway, I've heard from my colleagues from the official opposition. I can say that I appreciate their complimentary words, but I have to disagree with Mr. Hardeman's comment about the lack of creativity. I think that every one of our members has stood up and everything's been different. We made a point of making sure that the materials were different and very creative.

I'd like to compliment the member from Toronto—Danforth for his presentation, and all presentations by our caucus. I can safely say that we actually made a presentation, and we took our full time to explain the situation that's going on at York.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** It wasn't very much time at all.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Not much time at all; I would have liked to have seen more debate. I would have liked to have actually been able to have some content from the government and a little more—they did have some—content from the opposition, but they've tried to expedite this process.

Really, I'm shocked that I haven't had an ability to debate or talk to the governing body of this province about something so important to collective agreements and the future collective agreements of our province. Frankly, it surprises me and shocks me that there has been no full debate on this from the governing party, and I'm hoping that they'll still have an opportunity to do the right thing before this is over and order York University back to the table and do the right thing by the people who work for them, and the students, and we can be out of here in no time if they order them back to the table. We'd be happy to co-operate in that adventure, I would like to call it, because it definitely has been an adventure.

1730

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Response?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Thanks to those who commented, including those who made comments clarifying the vehicular habits.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Vehicular tendencies.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Yes, vehicular tendencies.

I want to say that I'm afraid this is not the last time this is going to happen. When I hear the people around this chamber, on the government benches, saying that they want to vote quickly for students, I look forward to seeing how they respond to the budget and whether they are going to be demanding an increase in funding for post-secondary education, an action to deal with the problems that are facing students, teachers and part-time faculty. Will we hear them cry out for the students at that point, cry out for the universities and colleges? This is a fairly cheap vote for you—this is a very cheap vote for you—but will you actually put the money on the table so that we don't, on another day, stand here with students from Humber, from Seneca, from U of T, from McMaster, from Guelph, from Algoma? There are many choices. There are many universities that are facing difficulties. Will we actually see you stand up and call out for the students? Then you'll have a very different base on which to stand. But right now, having been



complicit for years in driving down our status as a province that adequately funded education, you don't have much of a moral base to speak from. You've set up the situation of conflict, it's erupted, and now you're shutting it down. But that doesn't mean you've solved the problem; you've just postponed it.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Further debate.

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** There are many students from my riding who go to York University and they're eager to return, so I look forward to voting on this bill as soon as possible.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** The economy of those comments is remarkable. I know it's something people work on, to develop the ability to generate that type of economy.

It reminds me of the story about the prison inmates who would tell each other jokes in the middle of the night. One inmate would holler out "19," and everybody would break into laughter. Another cell inmate would holler out "27," and everybody would burst into laughter. A newly incarcerated guy said, "What's going on?" They said, "We have codes for these jokes. We just have to tell the number and we know what the joke is and the punch line." So that new inmate said, "Well, let me try one." He hollered out "47," and nobody laughed. He turned to his cellmate and said, "What's going on?" He said, "I don't know. Some people just can't tell a joke." But I anticipate that in reasonably short order this type of tendency will have Liberal backbenchers standing up and simply citing paragraph 22b, so that we'll have to have the Coles Notes for the Liberal caucus to know what in fact they mean.

It's that kind of trivialization of this issue that some of us find very disturbing. Look, this is going to wrap up. Don't give me crap about this going on forever and about it being blocked. It's not going to be, because the time allocation process is being utilized. We're here because we think this is a very serious issue. We think that the public, our voters, our constituents have a right to know why we're doing what we're doing, and New Democrats have attempted to be very clear about that. I find that type of utilization of a 20-minute speaking slot to be, quite frankly, shameful and not much of a service to that member's constituents. I hope that member's constituents have a chance at some point in the near future, when they read a Hansard on the computer, to see what the great contribution was by that member here, standing on his feet for a 20-minute slot and telling us that.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Questions and comments?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I agree with my colleague that the statement by the member from the Liberal Party was rather short. We've had some students in here for the whole day.

I'd like to take you back to 1985. I was a student entering a master's degree, my first day at Laurentian University as a master's degree student. I had held a full-

time job, I had three young kids at home, but I was going back to school. On my first day, Laurentian faculty walked out on strike, and they would stay out for a full month, putting my first year as a master's degree student in jeopardy.

I know exactly how you're feeling. I had to organize my life; I had to organize my finances to make it and apply for a university degree, a master's degree. It was hard to get into the program, but I had finally made it. I had made arrangements with my employer so that I could be excused from work for a period of six months so that I could go back to school and get a master's degree. I had made all sorts of arrangements for my three kids to be looked after before school, after school, before daycare, for the bus. The neighbours and the grandmothers all pitched in so that I could go back to school, and Laurentian University went on strike for a month, putting in jeopardy all the hard work I had put in so that I could go back to school. But I came from a labour town where collective bargaining means something. It means that the right of workers is a constitutional right, a right that you cannot take away. This is what makes this province so great and this is what makes this country so great. We have rights and we respect them, and the right to bargain is ours.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I'm going to be speaking shortly, and I'm going to take my full 20 minutes on this. Suffice to say I'll use my two minutes here to say thank you to CUPE. Thank you, CUPE 3903. It always is a test of character, of ethical backbone, when you stand in the face of no agreement. They have stood in the face of no agreement, and, boy, do we get it in our caucus now, because my phone's been ringing off the hook and our BlackBerries are buzzing every minute. About a third of the responses, I have to say, are very positive and supportive; about two thirds of them are not, and they range from all over Ontario.

When you stand for something that's right in principle and right ethically, even if the majority of the population stands against you, you are standing for history, so thank you, CUPE 3903. And thank you for standing up for all of the teaching assistants, all of the contract faculty around the province of Ontario, not just your own local, and that is so telling.

There was an article in NOW Magazine that said, "Did you know that your professor makes less than you do?" And it's absolutely true. My husband, on some days, I believe, makes about \$10 an hour by the time you factor in his travel time, his marking time, his teaching time. There's no job security, there are precious few benefits, and there's certainly no pension plan. You stand for him, and he doesn't teach at York. You stand for quality education. A degree that actually means something is what you're standing for, and I'll go into more on that in a little while. You stand for a real degree that gets you a real job with benefits and good pay and all that goes with a real and dignified workplace. Finally, that's what you



stand for, CUPE 3903: You stand for dignity. You stand for the dignity of the workplace.

For all of those out there who say, "They should be glad they've got any kind of job," I'd love to have seen them back in the day when unions started. I'd love to have seen them talk to Charles Dickens about child labour, about the rights of workers back then when there were no rights of workers.

More later. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. John Milloy:** Today's debate is about one thing and one thing only: getting 55,000 students back into the classroom. That's why we want to have a vote as soon as possible.

1740

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Response, the member for Brampton West? Further debate?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's a privilege to stand up.

I'd like to address the comment that was just made by the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities: "It's about getting 55,000 students back to school." Yes, it is, so where were you, on the other side, 76 days ago? Where were you over the Christmas break, when you could have been forcing the administration to sit down and bargain in good faith? Where were you until two days ago, when all of a sudden we heard on CP24 that we were coming back to debate this closure issue that's absolutely antithetical to collective bargaining? Come on.

They know, as well as everybody, by now, who has been listening to this debate, that they are verging on illegality here. They know, as well as anyone who's watching this debate, that the Supreme Court has already ruled on this, that they have ruled already on a very similar case in BC. They know, as well as everybody knows, that the administration, many of whom are making six figures—certainly, a president who has a housing allowance, a car allowance, a \$1-million-plus pension plan as well as a six-figure salary. Why aren't people sending e-mails to him? Why aren't they picketing him? Why aren't they phoning him, ringing his phone off the hook, and saying, "Why don't you take a pay cut, Mr. President? Why don't you at least bargain in good faith and get down there and talk to the strikers who are out there in the cold? Why don't you get off the golf course and do the right thing for those 55,000 students so they can get back to the classroom?"

Why don't you, across the aisle, and the administration of York University do the right thing for those students by guaranteeing them a quality of education and a degree that means something?

What do I mean by "a degree that means something"? Many of those on the picket lines are students. That seems to go by the wayside. Nobody understands that many of them are students, that they're still paying tuition. They're getting their pittance as TAs, but they are also paying their tuition, and that's why many of them have to drop out. That certainly has changed over the

years, as well. They have degrees: They've got master's; they're working on doctorates. Many of them are working on master's, as well. They want their degrees to mean something.

I talked to a woman who was on the picket line at CUPE, who had taught 16 years and every year reapplied for her job, with an advanced degree. Does that degree mean something? Does that degree actually carry any weight when you don't have a pension plan, when you don't have benefits, when you have to reapply every single year for your job? Is that what those students are getting at York: a devalued degree from a devalued university? Is that what you want? Because that's what you're getting with this piece of legislation, and that's what you are getting with your attitude that says that a post-secondary degree could be taught by anybody. You're saying, "It could be taught by anybody. Let the TAs teach it. It's not important to have a professor teach a course." Right? When over 50% of the teaching is done by students themselves, you are saying that it's not all that important to have a professor; it's not all that important to have an accredited university where others around the world look to it as a beacon of some kind of academic excellence.

You are devaluing education. How are you devaluing education? First and foremost, by simply not funding it. It's outrageous to me that if you're a European student, you can get a free post-secondary education. Some of us in this House went down to Cuba for a week-long, government-inspired trip. Did you know that in Cuba, post-secondary education is free? This is a country of 11 million that runs on a budget the size of Mississauga; a poor, developing country that can afford to give post-secondary education for free. You can't even afford to fund post-secondary education better than the other nine provinces. We are in fact 10 out of 10 for per capita funding. This is disgusting. This is egregious.

I'm noticing that a number of the ministers are laughing at this. That's sad. It's very, very sad when the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities is laughing at the fact that a poor, developing country can give to its students what you cannot or will not.

What is sad about this, what is truly sad, is that then, when the students who are TAing to try to help pay for their courses to get through university, and can't, many of them, when they are teaching the courses to all of our children—and I'm a graduate of York University, by the way. I went there; I know the atmosphere there. I know it's had a huge, long history of pathetic bargaining. My husband was a graduate student at York University and was out on the last strike, where again you saw management refuse to come to the table until pushed to the final, last moment. So instead of saying something to management, instead of saying something to overpaid administrators, you are saying this to those who are underpaid, to students. Instead of doing what's right, what's ethical and what's principled, instead of funding post-secondary education in a way that says that education is a right, you fund it as if it's a privilege, and



you fund it as if it's a privilege for only the very wealthiest of students. You fund it as if it's a privilege for a TA to make below the poverty line just to be able to walk in the door to teach the courses that tenure-track professors should be teaching, if they had enough tenure-track professors to teach them, which is, after all, what the union's asking.

You know what's so sad about this? What is so sad about this is when you see the media arrayed against what's right, when you see the official opposition party and the government arrayed against what's right, and you only see what amounts to a handful of people standing upon principle. What principle are they standing upon? The principle of collective bargaining, good-faith bargaining, and that's what CUPE has done.

You know, when you look at the four simple demands that they have made, one that they were willing to give a great deal on is salary. They don't, by the way, make \$63 an hour. So much misinformation has gone out about this strike. These TAs and contract faculty make, many of them, below the poverty line. What are they asking for? They are asking that the students get a quality of education that they deserve, a degree that's worth something, so if you get a Ph.D., you can teach at a university and get a full-time job. You don't have to drive a cab; you don't have to reapply for your job every single year. You can get a pension. You can get benefits. You can get a living wage. Isn't that what a doctorate is supposed to allow you to do? That's not what York doctorates allow you to do. That's not what any doctorates in Ontario allow you to do.

Why is that, and why do they cost so much? These are fundamental questions that we have to ask, and CUPE is asking them for us—not just for us, but for the entire province. They are saying that education is a right, that it is a right for everyone, not just those with money, and that a degree should count for something. And what it should count for is what it's designed for: that if you are getting a doctorate or a master's and you want to teach and you want to be an academic, there is a job there for you, and it's not just a contract temporary job, but it's a permanent job with some status, with some benefits, with some security. That's what a degree was meant for.

You know, it's horrifying when you talk to Europeans about our education system. It makes me ashamed, it absolutely does: in England, where after four years you are guaranteed a full-time job if you teach on contract; in Europe, where equal pay for equal work is the law throughout the European Union. What does that mean? That means that if you do the same job as your neighbour, you should get the same pay, that if you are teaching an hour and they are teaching an hour, your hours should be paid the same. That is the law throughout the European Union, and I'm not even talking about the countries where post-secondary education is free or virtually free. When I was in Sweden, the graduate students I met were thinking about going on strike to be paid more to go to school. Can you imagine: to be paid

more to go to graduate school? Their tuition was free; they were just not getting enough pay.

Brothers and sisters, come on. Liberals, Tories, whoever you are, wherever you sit ideologically around this place, think of your children. Think of your children and your grandchildren, and think of the kind of education that we are offering them now compared to even the education we got as boomers. We paid off our education very quickly because our education was, relatively, much cheaper, loans were much easier to get and degrees were much more valued.

1750

Every single year since I have been a graduate—I've gotten my master's, I've gotten my doctorate—every single year those degrees have been devalued and devalued some more. That's the reality of our education system in Ontario, and it's become more and more expensive. Is this the future we want? Is it? Is it the future you want for your grandchildren?

I know for my grandchildren, for my children—both of whom are graduates of Ontario universities—what I would like are degrees that mean something, and if that has to be fought for in the cold on a picket line by CUPE members, so be it. Thank you, CUPE 3903. If that has to be defended in this place by those who want to get up and exercise what they were elected to do, which is to defend the rights of their constituents, I'll do it. If it means working long hours, if it means dragging myself back in when I could be on TV, I'll do it. If it means pointing out the Volvo behind me or the Mercedes in front of me, I'll do it. So be it. Why? Because I care about my children and my grandchildren. I want them to not only have an education they can afford, that they can pay for, that they're not going to be \$30,000 in debt for just a B.A. that guarantees you nothing, but I want an education in a university that is valued around the world, that says a doctorate means something, a master's means something. It should mean security, an academic career. It should mean that you are valued; that your knowledge is valued, that it's valued enough to guarantee you a job year to year; that it's certainly valued enough to give you benefits year to year; that it's certainly valued enough to give you some kind of pension when you retire, not just the overpaid college administrators who happen to know and have friends in the right political parties but for everyone.

When I actually tell all those people who have e-mailed me and all those people who phoned me what's really going on at York University—that the administration has come to the bargaining table 12 times out of 77 days, when the administration basically, even as far as the government's negotiators are concerned, is not necessarily bargaining in good faith, and you tell them, "There are two sides to negotiation," that this isn't the union's fault; this is the fault of the Liberal government and their friends in administration at York University. That's whose fault it is. And if you're going to send your e-mails and angry phone calls to somebody, you should send them to them. They're not standing out in the cold



on a picket line; they're not making poverty line wages. No, they're not getting master's and Ph.Ds. that are devalued from a devalued institution. They're actually sitting pretty. Really, they're sitting pretty well, right?

I know the president has a housing allowance, he gets a car allowance, he gets a six-figure salary and he gets a nice pension package. Why aren't we angry with him? Where's he? Is he here? I don't see him in the stands. Why isn't he here? Why is he not here in this chamber? He should be here, he should be facing us, and I hope he's watching this on television. I'd love to have a meeting there.

I remember meeting with the last president of York University, Lorna—what's her name?—when my husband was on strike just a little bit before. She didn't know that. She just knew me as an MPP. She didn't know that I had ties to the labour movement that had gone on strike against her. I remember being ushered into this plush office with gorgeous overstuffed couches and chairs, brought a cup of coffee in beautiful china by a very well-heeled administrative assistant, and of course what did she want from me? She wanted a subway. It was a subway discussion. I happened to slip into the conversation, "My husband was on strike here for many, many weeks." All of a sudden it was like the air was sucked out of the room. The air was sucked out of the room at that point because all of a sudden she realized that she had in her office exactly what she had been trying to keep out of her office for, those many years. Okay?

So I would say, invite us. Invite the NDP caucus to your office, Mr. President of York University. Let us sit around in your overstuffed chairs, and explain to us why you're not out in the cold. Explain to us why you're not negotiating in good faith. Explain to all those 55,000 students why you've kept them out for 77 days, why you have kept them out. And then explain to us why you got your friends in government to do the dirty work for you. Explain that to us.

It would be very interesting to see, not suggesting anything, not making any inferences, who they support come election time, wouldn't it? I mean, I'd love to know who the president of York University gives money to in his political contributions—interesting to see that.

Invite us, I say. Invite us to those overstuffed chairs and explain to us why you've kept 55,000 students out of classes for 77 days when CUPE tried to get them back, when CUPE and the union movement tried to get them back, tried to fight for quality education, tried to fight for the collective bargaining process, tried to fight for what is ethical and what is principled, and that is the right to a college education, the absolute right to an education—not just until you're 18 years old but until you're 28 years old, whatever it takes—the right. Education is a right—should be a right. It isn't in this province, but it should be a right all the way through. That's what they're fighting for. They're fighting for the students and the education of the students, whereas the administration is sitting back

and doing nothing to make that come to pass. Twelve days out of 77 is nothing. Nothing.

So what else? What else do I have to say on this topic? Let's wrap up with this wonderful letter I got. Of all the letters I got, this one will warm the cockles of your little hearts. It says, "I am a first-year master's student at York University, a teaching"—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Member for Parkdale–High Park, BlackBerry are not allowed.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I'm not allowed to read a letter?

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** Not off your BlackBerry. If you had it in print, you could.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Sorry, I didn't have time to print it off. I'll paraphrase. This young woman, a member of CUPE 3903, a master's education teaching assistant, wrote to me and said she had been in negotiation with Mr. Pearson. She was there on that Saturday morning and she said she got the conspiracy that was at work here. She got that this government was just going to mandate CUPE back to work and that they weren't doing it fairly, and that the government was just waiting for this back-to-work legislation because they knew it was coming down the pike.

She concluded her letter by saying, "I used to be a member of the Liberal Party. I used to work for the Liberal Party," but she said, "No more. Now I understand that they're on the side of management just like the Conservatives, and so from now on I'm supporting the New Democratic Party." And I said, "Right on, Sister."

Finally, it has taken this, standing in the cold, to make you understand what we have understood for so long in this place: that there are very big differences between you and us, all of you and us; that there's only one party that you can guarantee will stand up for collective bargaining rights; that Liberals will go wherever the polls tell them and that they will not stand on ethics or principles; that the Tories, although standing on ethics and principles, stand on the wrong ones; and that there's only one party that will stand for working people who are trying to fight for better working conditions for all workers, for better social services for all people, for a better Ontario for all of our children, a better Ontario for all of our grandchildren, not just the grandchildren of the NDP but the grandchildren of the Liberal Party, the grandchildren of the Conservative Party, the grandchildren of all political persuasions. Only one party will stand for them, and that's the New Democratic Party.

I'm so proud of my colleagues. I'm proud of everyone here for speaking, and speaking eloquently, on this topic. I'm proud because we've shown our true colours in this issue. We've finally made the headlines for all the right reasons. We're not a byline; we're the headline, and the headline says, "NDP on the Side of Workers." That's what it says, and that's where we'll always be. Mark my words: We'll always be on the side of workers. When you collapse and when they collapse and when everybody collapses, here we'll be, only 10 of us—a magic number today, 10—



**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Then 20, then 30.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Then 20, then 30, then 2,000 and 3,000. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath):** It being 6 of the clock, I declare this House adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, January 27, at 10:30 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1800.*

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

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Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Aggelonitis, Sophia (LIB)	Hamilton Mountain	
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
<b>Arnott, Ted (PC)</b>	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Attorney General / Procureur général
<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)</b>	London West / London-Ouest	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Broten, Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
<b>Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Economic Development / Ministre du Développement économique Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
<b>Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
<b>Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
<b>Carroll, Hon. / L'hon. M. Aileen (LIB)</b>	Barrie	Minister of Culture / Ministre de la Culture Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
<b>Crozier, Bruce (LIB)</b>	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)</b>	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
<b>Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)</b>	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
<b>Horwath, Andrea (NDP)</b>	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Carol (LIB)	Huron–Bruce	
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Murdoch, Bill (IND)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)</b>	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)</b>	Scarborough—Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres
		Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches—East York	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)</b>	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of International Trade and Investment / Ministre du Commerce international et de l'Investissement
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London—Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland—Quinte West	
Runciman, Robert W. (PC)	Leeds—Grenville	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)</b>	Nipissing	Minister of Tourism / Ministre du Tourisme
		Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
<b>Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Deputy Premier / Vice-premier ministre
		Minister of Energy and Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Infrastructure
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton—Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga—Erindale	Minister of Small Business and Consumer Services / Ministre des Petites Entreprises et des Services aux consommateurs
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	
<b>Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Perth—Wellington	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
<b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>	Simcoe—Grey	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener—Waterloo	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
		Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	



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Dave Levac, Shafiq Qaadri  
Khalil Ramal, Peter Shurman  
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Howard Hampton, Greg Sorbara  
Norman W. Sterling, David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day





**University labour dispute**  
Mr. Paul Miller.....4702

**University labour dispute**  
Mr. Jeff Leal.....4702

**University labour dispute**  
Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis.....4702

**University labour dispute**  
Mr. David Zimmer .....4702

**Tuition**  
Mr. Jim Wilson .....4703

**University labour dispute**  
Mr. Peter Tabuns .....4703

**University labour dispute**  
Mr. Gilles Bisson .....4703

**University labour dispute**  
Mr. Dave Levac.....4703

**University labour dispute**  
Mr. Michael Prue .....4704

**University labour dispute**  
Mr. Dave Levac.....4704

**Order of business**  
Hon. Michael Bryant.....4704

**House business**  
Hon. Michael Bryant.....4704

**ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR**

**York University Labour Disputes Resolution Act, 2009, Bill 145, Mr. Fonseca / Loi de 2009 sur le règlement des conflits de travail à l'Université York, projet de loi 145, M. Fonseca**

Hon. Peter Fonseca .....4704

Ms. Lisa MacLeod .....4705

Mr. Paul Miller.....4705

Mr. Michael Prue .....4706

Mr. Peter Shurman .....4706

Mr. Jim Wilson .....4709

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer .....4712

Mr. Michael Prue .....4713

Mr. Paul Miller.....4713

Mr. Peter Tabuns .....4714

Mr. Dave Levac.....4714

Mr. Peter Shurman .....4714

Mr. Howard Hampton .....4715

Mr. Dave Levac.....4722

Mr. Michael Prue .....4722

Mr. Pat Hoy.....4722

Mr. Peter Shurman .....4723

Mr. Howard Hampton .....4723

Mr. Peter Kormos.....4723

Mr. Ernie Hardeman.....4725

Mr. Paul Miller.....4725

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel .....4726

Mr. Peter Shurman .....4726

Mr. Peter Kormos.....4726

Mr. Michael Prue .....4726

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn .....4729

Mr. Robert W. Runciman.....4729

Mme France Gélinas .....4729

Ms. Helena Jaczek.....4729

Mr. Michael Prue .....4729

Mr. Paul Miller.....4730

Mr. Reza Moridi.....4733

Mr. Peter Shurman .....4733

Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....4733

Mr. Yasir Naqvi .....4733

Mr. Paul Miller.....4733

Mr. Robert W. Runciman.....4733

Mr. Peter Kormos.....4734

Mr. Gilles Bisson .....4734

Mrs. Liz Sandals.....4734

Mr. Ernie Hardeman.....4734

Mr. Robert W. Runciman.....4735

Mr. Peter Tabuns .....4735

Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....4737

Mr. Jeff Leal.....4738

Mr. Peter Shurman .....4738

Mr. Paul Miller.....4738

Mr. Peter Tabuns .....4738

Mr. Vic Dhillon.....4739

Mr. Peter Kormos.....4739

Mme France Gélinas .....4739

Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....4739

Hon. John Milloy .....4740

Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....4740

Second reading debate deemed adjourned .....4743

# CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Monday 26 January 2009 / Lundi 26 janvier 2009

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Peter Shurman .....	4689
Ms. Cheri DiNovo.....	4689

## ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

### University labour dispute

Mr. Peter Shurman .....	4689
Hon. John Milloy .....	4689

### University labour dispute

Mr. Jim Wilson .....	4690
Hon. John Milloy .....	4690

### University labour dispute

Mr. Howard Hampton .....	4690
Hon. George Smitherman.....	4690

### University funding

Mr. Howard Hampton .....	4691
Hon. George Smitherman.....	4691

### University labour dispute

Mr. Peter Shurman .....	4692
Hon. George Smitherman.....	4692

### Employment supports

Mr. Paul Miller.....	4693
Hon. Michael Bryant.....	4693

### Renewable energy

Mr. Pat Hoy.....	4693
Hon. George Smitherman.....	4693

### Elementary teachers

Mrs. Joyce Savoline .....	4694
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne.....	4694

### Nurses

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	4694
Hon. David Caplan.....	4695

### Research and innovation

Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis.....	4695
Hon. John Wilkinson.....	4695

### Manufacturing jobs

Mr. Tim Hudak .....	4696
Hon. Michael Bryant.....	4696

### Forest industry

Mr. Gilles Bisson .....	4696
Hon. George Smitherman.....	4696

## Education funding

Mr. Dave Levac.....	4697
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne.....	4697

## Public transit

Ms. Lisa MacLeod .....	4697
Hon. Jim Watson .....	4698

## Skills training

Mr. Michael Prue .....	4698
Hon. John Milloy .....	4698

## Hospital services

Mr. Yasir Naqvi .....	4699
Hon. David Caplan.....	4699

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

### University labour dispute

Mr. Ted Arnott .....	4699
----------------------	------

### Public transit

Mr. Phil McNeely.....	4699
-----------------------	------

### University labour dispute

Mr. Jim Wilson.....	4700
---------------------	------

### Correctional facilities

Mr. Peter Tabuns .....	4700
------------------------	------

### University labour dispute

Mrs. Laura Albanese .....	4700
---------------------------	------

### University labour dispute

Mr. Ernie Hardeman.....	4700
-------------------------	------

## PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

### University labour dispute

Mr. Jim Wilson.....	4701
---------------------	------

### University labour dispute

Mr. Gilles Bisson .....	4701
-------------------------	------

### University labour dispute

Mr. Reza Moridi.....	4701
----------------------	------

### University labour dispute

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	4701
-------------------------	------

### University labour dispute

Mr. Kuldip Kular.....	4702
-----------------------	------

*Continued on inside back cover*



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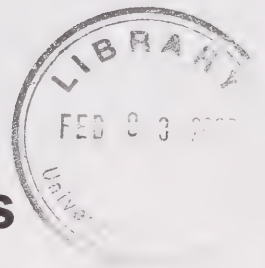
First Session, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 39<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)



Tuesday 27 January 2009

Mardi 27 janvier 2009

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 27 January 2009

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 27 janvier 2009

*The House met at 1030.*

*Prayers.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** We'll have the Lord's Prayer, followed by the Baha'i prayer.

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** The students I'm about to introduce have been planning this trip to Queen's Park to see us here for over a year, and they're very excited about this. They're from Fairbank Memorial Community School. Their teachers are Mrs. Morton and Mr. Thoeny. Thank you very much for coming.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I would like to introduce Professor Brian E. Brown, the president of OCUFA, the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations, who is here to watch question period and the debate this afternoon.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I'm proud to introduce someone who's in a placement in my office from Ryerson University's social work program, and her name is Danielle Pearson.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** My question is for the Premier. Given the current crisis at York University, a severe risk of a strike at the University of Toronto next month, and as many as 10 universities set to possibly go on strike in the middle of next year, this is going to be your legacy as the so-called education Premier if you don't take corrective action. So I ask you, Premier, isn't the real underlying issue here your negligence, and the fact that your minister has no long-term plan for keeping students in class at our colleges and universities?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I appreciate the opportunity and thank the member for the question. The member makes a good point insofar as he's raising the notion that we don't have an Education Relations Commission equivalent for the post-secondary sector. I have already had the opportunity to chat with the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, and asked him to give some thought to us putting in place a comparable body that would keep track of the students' interests at all times. We would like to consult on that before we move further

with that, but again, I think the member makes a good point in this regard.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** My point was the competency of your minister. Premier, you have no plan for post-secondary education, no plan for health care and no plan for the economy. You've got a minister overseeing a portfolio where only the state of Alabama has a worse student funding record in all of North America. He's managing a Second Career program where the uptake should be 20,000 but it's less than 4,000. You're dead last in terms of per capita student funding in our post-secondary sector, and you've got the second-highest tuition fees in all of Canada. Now your minister made a mess for 50,000 students at York University. How many more Ontarians have to suffer because of your hapless minister?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, I can't agree with the premise of that question. I think most objective observers would argue that we have made some dramatic new investments in our post-secondary education system. I think they would also argue that we've had some significant positive results as a result of those investments. We're investing \$6.2 billion over five years in our colleges, universities and apprenticeships. We've enhanced student assistance by \$1.5 billion. We're helping 150,000 more students with financial assistance. We have 100,000 more students in our colleges and universities, and 3,300 new faculty members have been hired. I could go on and on. But I think that surely there is more—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Response?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** In a knowledge-based global economy, there will always be more to be done, but I think by any objective standard we have made some real progress.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** You can talk all you want, Premier, but the public has lost confidence in your minister. During these tough economic times, your minister has shown disrespect for taxpayers' dollars. When you do the math, in the Second Career program he has spent \$100,000 in advertising for each person enrolled in the program. Clearly it's time for your Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities to start looking for a second career himself. The future of our young people is too precious to allow this minister to continue messing up.

So I ask you, given his incompetence, have you demanded his resignation, and if you haven't, will you do so today?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I will take the opportunity to thank Minister John Milloy for the work he has been doing and in particular for being so bold as to move ahead with our Second Career strategy. We have a \$1-billion Employment Ontario program in place. The Second Career strategy is an overlay on top of that. That original \$1-billion program deals with thousands and thousands of Ontarians and provides them with everything from short-term training opportunities to other kinds of help when it comes to getting a job. What we decided to do, and Minister Milloy was instrumental in helping us to see the need, was to put in place a long-term training strategy, which is not in existence anywhere in Canada. We have about 4,000 people enrolled in that so far. We are firmly convinced that by the end of the program we will achieve our target of 20,000 long-term trainings.

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** My question is also for the Premier. It's great to see you here today, Premier. I'm sure the students are relieved that you have found some time to devote to this crisis at York University.

In the relatively short time that I've been here, I have watched your Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities try to justify job-killing apprenticeship ratios, an inappropriate tax-funded union venue for a Liberal fundraiser and now his dereliction of duty in not acting sooner to avoid the mess that brings us here today. I've repeatedly asked for his resignation, and he refuses. When are you demanding it?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** We can argue over how we got here, but I certainly think that the member and I are of one mind when it comes to moving as quickly as we can now to get the students back in the class.

I ask him to take a look at the Conservative government's record in the face of a similar circumstance. It was on day 71 of the strike that they had a supervised vote back in 2001. For us, it was on day 75 of the strike that we had a supervised vote. Four days after that, their strike was settled, and that was great. Four days after that, it became clear to us that it wasn't going to be settled, so we brought in back-to-work legislation. If he checks the record, we moved at about the same pace.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary.

1040

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I've checked that record, Premier, and in 2001 we didn't have an entirely shut down university.

You appear to be the only one who has confidence in this minister, because 50,000 students and their parents certainly do not. This fiasco at York University has shown Ontario your true colours. The truth is, you dragged your feet in ending this strike because you were

afraid of a union taking you to court. This is really about protecting your reputation with the unions, rather than protecting the students of the province, isn't it?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I want to introduce my friend to the notion of balance. There is such a thing as collective bargaining and from time to time it produces a frustrating result, an impasse or a deadlock, as it did in this particular circumstance, but most times it works pretty well. I think we all prefer an agreement which has been arrived at by the parties working things through, but from time to time that doesn't happen. I think we have to attach some real respect to the collective bargaining process even when it's not particularly popular to do so. We have done that. We came to the conclusion after some 75 days—it was 72 days in 2001—that it was time for us to move. We have done so. Now there are some in Ontario who would argue that we're moving too quickly. We think that we've got it just about right; we think we've brought some real balance to this challenge.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Many other people, ourselves on this side included, came to that conclusion a lot sooner, Premier. Why are you so concerned about being taken to court by the unions when you had no hesitation in dragging the parents of autistic children through the courts, going after them for legal fees just because they dared to demand what you promised for their children? When it comes to the unions you put on the kid gloves; when it comes to the parents of our youngest citizens you haul out a sledgehammer. Is that the way it works in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'm going to, as much as I can, stay focused on the job at hand. The reason that we are here today, the reason that we are here this week, is to step in and assume our responsibility because the collective bargaining process has failed. It has gone on for too long and the educational interests of our young people are being compromised. That's why we're here. We've introduced a bill. We'd like to move on that bill as quickly as we possibly can; we'd like to have those students back in class as quickly as we possibly can. I'll let my friend undertake some armchair quarterbacking about what went on before and what we need to do in the future. I've opened my mind to that; I think there's some real progress that we might make in that regard and we look forward to hearing from the opposition there, but I think it's important for us to stay focused on the job at hand. Let's do everything we can to get those students back in the classroom as soon as possible.

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** My question is for the Premier. The workers at York University are prepared to file a legal challenge to the government's back-to-work legislation, so we want to be sure that the Premier knows the difference between a bargaining deadlock and a unilateral refusal to negotiate. My question to the Premier is



this: When the workers agree to accept the employer's salary offer and the employer does not respond to that, is that a deadlock or a unilateral refusal to bargain on the part of the employer?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I appreciate the question. I'm not prepared to get into legal semantics because I'm not qualified to do so, but what I can say is that, from a layman's perspective, talks failed. We sent in our top arbitrator, top mediator, Reg Pearson. He came back and said, "I can't get the parties to move." He didn't assign blame to any particular side. He said that there was not a possibility for us to find an agreement here. Given those circumstances, we feel we have no option but to do the right thing, which is to bring in back-to-work legislation. That's why we're seeking to move ahead with this as quickly as we can.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Premier, these aren't legal semantics. These are the facts of what was going on in terms of the York University administration, so let me try again. When the workers reduce their demands, come to an agreement on the vast majority of benefit package issues and indicate they desire to negotiate adjustments to their few remaining issues, and the employer refuses to respond, is that a deadlock or, again, a unilateral refusal to negotiate by the employer?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, I'm not privy to all of the positions put forward and the decisions taken by the parties on both sides. What I am privy to is the result and the outcome. There's been a failure to achieve a resolution, a failure to achieve a negotiated settlement, a failure to get young people back in the classroom where they belong. In view of those three failures, we had no option but to step in and do what's right. That's why we're here. I'll let my friend engage in, "What about this and what about that?" But all I know is, based on the advice I got from our mediator, that talks had failed, and there was no reasonable prospect of progress. That's why we're here today.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Did it ever occur to the Premier that maybe there was a failure because York University never really intended to bargain; that they determined from the outset that they were not going to bargain for three weeks over Christmas; that they were only going to meet 11 times in 77 days?

So let me ask the Premier another question: When the workers are prepared to negotiate a balance between the conversion to tenure positions and long-term contracts for instructors that will improve the quality of service to students, and once again the employer refuses to respond, is that a deadlock or, again, a unilateral refusal to bargain by the employer?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'm sure that others will attach legal interpretations to the actions or absence of actions taken by one or two of the parties, but I don't think that's our responsibility. I think our responsibility

as legislators, those who have been entrusted with upholding the greater public interest, is to ensure that we move as quickly as we can in the face of evidence that talks have failed. I can't pretend to know exactly why they failed. I can't pretend to know exactly the position taken by each side, but I do know that the talks have failed. I also know that, on the basis of the information received from our mediator, there was no reasonable prospect of achieving any kind of success here, which again is why we are here today, which is why I would urge my colleague to co-operate so we can get this bill passed as soon as possible.

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** To the Premier again: Even your hand-picked mediator, Reg Pearson, when he met with worker representatives, didn't say there was a failure. I want to quote what he said: "Everything that I've seen has been not quite there, and quite frankly, they are"—meaning the York University administration—"not prepared to move out of their ballpark. That could be because they're waiting for government to fix the problem."

Premier, you also have a legal responsibility because there are constitutional rights and legal rights involved here. One of the things that I've learned in life is, you don't do away with bad behaviour by encouraging it, but it seems that your government is encouraging York University. They refuse to bargain. They refuse to respond. They refuse to meet. Even your mediator says it looks like they're delaying, hoping the government will fix the problem. Do you think that's really a good thing to do, to reward that kind of behaviour—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. Response?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I just don't see it that way. There comes a time when—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** There comes a time, Speaker, if I might—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Order.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** It's my view that Ontarians are people of goodwill and they are patient and they are generous, but they also have a limit. I think that we are now representing the view of Ontarians that we have reached our limit. There comes a time when, frankly, we are no longer so concerned about the issues themselves and the particular approach brought by each side, but rather we've become very interested in getting young people back in the classroom. This has gone on for too long. We have a shared responsibility now, I would argue, to do what we need to do to get these young people back in the classroom.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary.

1050

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Premier, here, again, is the reality: York University demanded, as is their legal right,



that their offer be put to a vote. In a democratic vote, that offer was rejected by the workers. What was York's response? The response was, "Well, we refuse to meet and we refuse to negotiate."

Premier, no negotiations have gone on in the last week. I haven't heard you call up York University and say to them, "Get back to the bargaining table and use your best efforts to get a deal." It seems to me that option is still open to you. If you really want the students back in the classroom, why haven't you called up York University and said, "Get back to the bargaining table and bargain a good contract and stop this conduct of refusing to negotiate items that are on the table"?"

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I do encourage the sides to keep talking. They can pursue discussions now; they can pursue discussions should this bill pass. I want to be clear, they can also continue to pursue discussions notwithstanding the passage of this bill if there's consent, but the important thing is that young people be back in the classroom.

I say to my colleague, as well: He says that one particular side was not prepared to continue to talk and for that reason we shouldn't move. Well, how long are we supposed to wait? What if they refuse to talk for another month, for two months or three months or four months or beyond that? At some time, we have a responsibility here to interpret and give expression to the greater public interest. The greater public interest demands that at some point in time we blow the whistle and say, "Time is up. Young people have to be back in the classroom." That's why we're here today, and again, that's why I ask my colleague for his support to ensure we get those young people in the classroom as soon as possible.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** The Premier wants to talk about public interest. Where was the Premier's concern for public interest when York would only meet four times before Christmas? Where was the Premier's concern for public interest when, in the three weeks over Christmas, York University administration refused to meet and bargain? Where was the Premier's concern with public interest when York simply walked away from the table and said, "Since you rejected our offer, we are not prepared to negotiate or talk any further"? Premier, if you are really concerned about public interest, you should have been calling on York to get to the bargaining table before Christmas and during Christmas when they refused to bargain and last week when they refused to bargain.

Are you going to call York University now and tell them, "Get back to the table and bargain"? That is how these kinds of issues should be settled, through negotiation and bargaining, not a refusal to bargain, which has been York's position all along.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Just for the record, in fact my office had a number of conversations with York University strongly encouraging them throughout this process that they return to the bargaining table. But my

friend, I know, also understands that we cannot compel the parties to come together and to negotiate; we can only create those kinds of opportunities. Ultimately, we decided it was important to send in our particular mediator.

I'm also more than prepared to phone the president of York University again and to encourage him to go back to the table and do everything that he possibly can. But we will move ahead with this bill. We will assume our responsibility. We will do everything we can to make sure that we get the young people back in the classroom at the earliest possible opportunity.

## AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** My question is for the Premier. Premier, there's a news story today indicating that General Motors intends to access all of the financial assistance you've made available to them by the end of March. In the past, we know you've indicated that for taxpayers' dollars to flow to the automakers, one of the requirements would be participation by the Canadian Auto Workers. Again, I think it was yesterday that Ken Lewenza, the president of the CAW, reiterated his position that his union has no interest whatsoever in worker concessions. Premier, given Mr. Lewenza's public pronouncements and your government's stated need for CAW being part of the solution, is the support package offered to the Big Three now in jeopardy?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Let me say this at the outset: We've heard from GM on a few things. First of all—and I'll give a supplementary to my colleague the Minister of Economic Development—GM is saying they don't need money immediately, but they do plan to call upon us to help with transformation dollars.

I can also say that in my discussions with the CAW, I certainly made it clear to them that we're all going to have to bring something to the table. I told them that we cannot rely exclusively on the goodwill of Ontario taxpayers to help sustain a struggling industry or a struggling auto company. Mr. Lewenza certainly made it clear to me that they were prepared to do their part. We didn't get into any details in terms of what that might entail, but I would certainly suspect that we cannot move forward with these kinds of support packages—loans are what we're talking about here—as a one-off with only one party bringing something to the table. So we'll be counting on the CAW to do its share as well.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** Maybe the Premier can give the hard-pressed taxpayers in this province some of the details today. Just tell us exactly what he expects the contribution to be from the CAW. I'm quoting you last month from the Toronto Star. You said, "What I asked the CAW is to understand that if taxpayers are going to be involved in lending support ... it's really important that we all be seen to be coming to the table to be part of the solution."

That was last month. We know now that in another two months General Motors wants the money to flow.



Mr. Lewenza is apparently saying, "Concessions be damned." If it was important last month that all parties be involved in the solution and one party is refusing to come to the dance, how can you proceed with this package? Let's have some details. Where do we go from here?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Economic Development.

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** I do want to assure the member that, as the Premier said, it's not only our position that all parties need to come to the table, that there be an equality of sacrifice, but that has been agreed to. The CAW has said several times that they will come to the table, that they will in fact work with management and work with the government in order to come forth with a viable package that's in the public interest.

Exactly what does that mean? That is something that management and labour are going to be in discussion about for some time. The issue is, are they going to come to the table and is there going to be equality of sacrifice? As the Premier said, not only is it the Ontario government's position that that's the case, but that's the case as has been articulated by Mr. Lewenza, both to the government and to the federal minister, Tony Clement.

#### INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM FUNDING

**Mr. Paul Miller:** To the Premier: Boosting investment in local infrastructure like roads, bridges and public transit meets a serious need and helps us to sustain jobs in troubling times. Yesterday the Premier agreed to match new federal infrastructure dollars. Municipalities have historically been asked to contribute one third to the projects. The problem is that the cash-strapped municipalities simply do not have the money to fund such projects, and many shovel-ready projects will never get off the ground. Will the Premier commit to covering the one-third municipal share on shovel-ready projects?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** First off, I think on the matter of matching funds, it was very well established yesterday by our government that as a matter of principle the government of Ontario is prepared to match any additional incremental resources that the government of Canada makes available for the purpose of investing in a wide array of much-needed infrastructure. I think we could all agree on that.

I think, as well, the principle of trying to leverage as much as possible the participation of as many governments as possible is a very, very good one. We are all extraordinarily mindful—and I know the government of Canada is mindful of this as well—that there are differing capabilities out there amongst municipalities, but before we say that no municipality in the province of Ontario is prepared to be a one-third participant, we really should speak to them. I've been doing that, my federal colleague has been doing that, and many of them have been indicating that they have a variety of shovel-ready projects

that they are more than ready to contribute a one-third share to. The key point is flexibility, and we'll—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I'll take that as a no, maybe.

Addressing the economic crisis means getting shovels in the ground in 2009. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities has identified billions of dollars in shovel-ready infrastructure projects in Ontario alone, helping to sustain or create thousands of jobs. But the one-third municipal cost-share requirement means that some critical job-sustaining infrastructure projects may not be able to go ahead as quickly as we need them to. As the president of FCM said, "Cost-sharing requirements pose a challenge for cash-strapped municipalities." Why won't the Premier commit to covering the one-third municipal share now?

1100

**Hon. George Smitherman:** The honourable member didn't like the answer because it didn't jive with the question that he had already written by way of supplementary. But he's going to have to work through this. What we said is "flexibility." We recognize differing circumstances out there, but there are municipalities that are prepared to be participants on a one-third basis.

I remind the honourable member, as an example, that at the heart of the communities component of the Building Canada fund is very much established the principle of one third, one third, one third. We all want to enhance the opportunity for investment in infrastructure. Many municipalities stand at the ready to be active partners in that model. Wherever possible, it benefits the investment in infrastructure to leverage as much as possible from those sectors.

My own city here in the province of Ontario, the city of Toronto, has a very, very large infrastructure budget. Within their ask are projects on which they themselves have indicated their willingness to participate as a funding agent.

#### POVERTY

**Mr. Charles Sousa:** My question is to the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Poverty affects us all. A recent report found that the federal and provincial governments are losing as much as \$13.1 billion per year because of poverty. That puts the cost of poverty at almost \$3,000 for every household in the province.

But more importantly, poverty takes a human toll. That's why my community celebrated the release of Ontario's first-ever poverty reduction strategy last December. In its preparation, the minister engaged in extensive consultations across the province, including the Peel region. In addition, I know many members of this House were proud to contribute by hosting their own consultations in their communities. The result is a plan that sets an aggressive target of reducing child poverty by 25% over five years.

The residents of Mississauga are pleased that this government is taking poverty seriously. Now they want to



know how we will meet our targets, how progress will be measured, and can the minister please share with the House—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. The Minister of Children and Youth Services?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you to the member for his question. I was very happy to join with the member from Mississauga South, and other members from that area, to meet with community partners and constituents to talk about how we can move forward with the implementation of the poverty reduction strategy.

I have to tell you it's very exciting to see how committed community members are about getting on board and supporting the poverty reduction strategy. They're committed to making a difference.

We have recognized in our strategy that our success depends on community partners coming together with a shared goal. It's exactly the kind of collaboration we need to achieve our 25% reduction in child poverty. We need everyone working together—communities, businesses and governments—to reduce the number of kids living in poverty by 25% over the next five years. We've laid out a comprehensive plan, substantial new provincial investments built on the foundation of—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Charles Sousa:** After multiple meetings with stakeholders in my riding, I've learned the importance of community involvement when it comes to addressing poverty. Our network sessions include a wide diversity of stakeholders, including the Compass, a south-Mississauga organization of church groups and volunteers that not only provides food, but acts as a resource centre; the Lakeshore Corridor Community Team; a great number of local businesses and individuals; as well as Foodpath, which collects and distributes food every day; and the United Way of Peel. I'd also like to recognize and applaud the region of Peel for their decision to use \$67 million of provincial infrastructure funding to build 200 units of social housing.

I've seen first-hand the good work that these groups do, and I know that any strategy to reduce poverty will be successful only in partnership with the community. My question is, how will local communities in Mississauga South be engaged? How will the government draw on their strengths in order to help those less fortunate—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. Minister of Children and Youth Services.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Communities are at the heart of change. We can and we will take action at the provincial level to raise incomes and create opportunities. But we know that dynamic and thriving communities are every bit as important. That's why our poverty reduction strategy includes a communities opportunities fund to encourage local partnerships with groups like Foodpath, with the Compass and with the United Way. The fund will enable better collaboration and drive innovation at the local level. We want to work with community leaders

to affect change in their communities, and this will go a long way towards doing that.

But when it comes to breaking the cycle of poverty, nothing's more important than education, and that's why I'd encourage the NDP to quit their grandstanding and let the York University students get back to their classrooms as soon as possible.

## ELEMENTARY TEACHERS

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** To the Minister of Education: Yesterday, I asked what your government's plan was for resolving the contract dispute with ETFO, and again, there was a non-answer. Minister, you made your best offer to ETFO and they turned it down. We've seen this scenario before. What assurance can you give parents across Ontario that their young children will not be locked out of schools in March?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** As I said yesterday, I'm actually extremely proud of this government's record on our labour relations, and particularly in the education sector. As of today, 380 of the 394 potential local agreements across the province have been settled. We have agreements with secondary teachers, with support workers, and with French and Catholic elementary teachers. We have a broad sweep of agreement across this province.

On the issue of ETFO, as I said yesterday, it's extremely important that the federation and the boards keep kids at the centre of those discussions. The local table discussions have to have an opportunity to roll out. Because of our very good relationship with the federations, because of our record of a good dialogue, I have every confidence that the boards and the federations are going to be able to work this out.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** Minister, you and your government will be judged by how you deal with difficult issues in difficult times. It is not well known in the public, but the contracts that you boast about settling have the meetoo clause in them. There are almost one million elementary school students in Ontario. That's hundreds of thousands of parents who will certainly not be laughing when it's time to stay home and look after their children when they should be at work. Your government has been negotiating with the elementary teachers' federation since this past summer and you still can't close to a resolution.

Minister, what is your plan? Will you wait until February when the strike vote is taken or will you knock a few heads now? Or will you wait for another strike?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** It's my experience that working with people actually works better than fear-mongering and creating a conflict where it doesn't exist. It actually works better to build relationships and to be able to then have a difficult discussion.

What we have done over the last year is we have had those difficult discussions with federations and boards.



We have managed to bring home agreement across this province. The member opposite is part of a party that has a legacy of 26 million days of school lost in this province. I actually wouldn't expect the member opposite to understand the value of building relationships. I'm going to continue doing what this government does best: We work with people, we listen to people, we come to agreement, and we make difficult decisions when that is necessary.

### HOME CARE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour le ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée. Mina Mettinen is a Sudbury woman. She's young. She has Asperger's; she has amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or Lou Gehrig's disease. She's paralyzed, in a wheelchair, incontinent, and she eats with a feeding tube, but since November she hasn't received any home care services she desperately needs. Even after an 11-day hunger strike, she was not able to get home care.

Our home care system doesn't work. It has failed Mrs. Mettinen. It is broken. What concrete steps will the minister commit to today to ensure home care services to Ontarians who need them the most?

**Hon. David Caplan:** In fact, our government has made tremendous efforts to increase home care right across the province, over a billion dollars invested in our first five years alone, which has vastly expanded home care services right across the province.

What's incredibly disappointing here—and the member herself is subject to the same patient confidentiality, as she has had a chance to look at the particular files for this case—is her attempt to politicize this particular issue, to inject her ideology into the conversation about the care of this particular client.

1110

I can tell you that in Sudbury, I can tell you that—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Order.

**Hon. David Caplan:** —right across the province, CCACs and home care workers provide excellent quality of care for clients right across the way.

The narrow ideology of my friend opposite prevents her from seeing the increase in quality, the measures that—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you, Minister. Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** If the measure that the minister is talking about is changing the ratio of 75 to 25, the bidding system doesn't work. I've been working to get home care reinstated for this severely disabled woman; it is true. I have spoken with representatives of the CCAC. They are compassionate and skilled people who work really hard, but they work with a broken home care system.

Mrs. Mettinen was failed by a system that puts profit ahead of people. There is no collaboration as a result of the government's privatization of home care. Minister, before more people suffer like Mrs. Mettinen is suffering,

will you do away with the competitive bidding process for our home care system?

**Hon. David Caplan:** In fact, the member opposite is quoted as saying, "Not every home care patient is a cute little grandmother waiting for you with hot cookies ... out of the oven."

This is the attitude that we have; this is the attitude and the denigration that this member has brought to personal support workers, to nurses right across the province. It is a shameful attitude that this member has brought. The home care system—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Member for Hamilton Centre.

**Hon. David Caplan:** —in fact is providing much better care to Ontarians right across the province. In fact, I would quote to you the executive director of the Ontario Home Care Association, who says: "We're pleased to be involved in helping to improve the transparency and quality of home care services in Ontario. The best way to ensure high quality care is through constant feedback from clients and service providers," measures that this member and her narrow ideology oppose. On this side of the House, we're—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you, Minister. New question?

### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. As you know, there was speculation over the weekend and yesterday that the federal government would be committing funds to affordable housing. I know, from listening to the minister in the House, that he has been advocating this for quite some time, and it now appears that the federal government is heeding that advice.

Throughout our province, and in my own community, people are asking all levels of government to respond to the need for affordable housing. I read with interest an article in the National Post from Monday, discussing the need for more affordable housing. The article said that Canada had an estimated 200,000 homeless people. The cost for health, criminal and social services for these individuals is approximately \$6 billion each year.

Could the minister please tell the House how his ministry, in partnership with other levels of government, is addressing the pressing concerns?

**Hon. Jim Watson:** Let me begin by thanking the honourable member for Ottawa—Orléans, who has been a great advocate, both when he was a city councillor in Ottawa and now as an MPP, for affordable housing.

I was pleased to speak with the federal minister responsible for housing, the Honourable Diane Finley, last week, who confirmed that the federal government will be back in the affordable housing business. This is something that this government, provincial governments from coast to coast, housing advocates and municipalities in Ontario have been asking for for some time. We're



cautiously optimistic that there will be some good news in the federal budget.

But the McGuinty government has not been waiting for the federal government to come to the table. In fact, we have been initiating expenditures from the old affordable housing program. Just last week, for instance, a \$6.3-million project for the West Don Lands for 91 units was announced, and \$770,000 for 11 units in London. Last week, I was in Markham with Minister Chan and other officials from York and Markham, when we announced funding and the construction that began for 120 units—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you, Minister. Supplementary?

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Thank you, Minister. I'm pleased to hear of this co-operation and what is getting done for affordable housing.

I know that our government has worked well in partnership with other governments, particularly municipal governments. Many people in my community of Ottawa—Orléans were optimistic about the government's announcement last fall of the provincial-municipal review.

The current transit strike in Ottawa has also exposed how difficult life can be when vital services are not there. More than ever, residents in my riding are telling me that they want to see more affordable housing in Ottawa, to assist those who need it most. As a member representing an Ottawa riding, I'm particularly interested to know what projects under the AHP program our city is benefiting from. Can the minister outline what projects under the affordable housing program Ottawa has benefited from and what funds in general our government has provided for housing in Ottawa?

**Hon. Jim Watson:** Thanks to the work of people like the honourable member, our colleague the honourable member from Ottawa Centre, and other Ottawa Liberal caucus members, we have ensured that Ottawa has received its fair share of funding. In fact, to date Ottawa has received \$44 million under the affordable housing program. That is going to create close to 1,000 affordable housing units in the city. This is in addition to the \$8.2 million that the city of Ottawa received for repair and rehabilitation, as part of the McGuinty government's \$100-million commitment to repairing old housing stock. Five hundred thousand dollars has gone to the city of Ottawa in the innovative program called the rent bank. The Beaver Barracks project that's ready to get under way will provide 248 units in downtown Ottawa—\$1.6 million for 24 units on Richmond Road. I was recently in the east end. The member knows Fiona Faucher place, which is a new affordable housing unit that is up and running and housing people—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you, Minister. New question.

#### HIGHWAY SERVICE CENTRES

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** My question is for my old friend the Minister of Transportation, and I am optimistic he's going to give me a favourable response.

Last week, it was announced that two 401 service centres in the Front of Yonge township in eastern Ontario will be closed for refurbishment at the end of March for at least three years, throwing close to 200 people out of work. Minister, as we know, the province is in a recession. We're seeing job losses mount every week. As you know, this is a particularly hard-hit area of the province. This plan was clearly designed in better economic times. Minister, I ask you, why is your government unnecessarily throwing 200 people out of work in the midst of a recession?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** The member was kind enough to contact my office about this matter and has been in the forefront of defending the interests of his constituents in this regard, and I commend him for that.

What has happened with many of these service centres is that the leases that were there with the various oil companies who provide gas are expiring. As we refurbish and renew them, the companies have to actually go through an environmental cleanup of the area. When you have any old gas site or oil site you have to go through that. So there is a temporary closing of these. We put out a request for proposal for renewing and refurbishing them.

I think the member would agree with me that it would be desirous to see even better service centres out there. But I am looking into the matter to see if there's an opportunity to keep them open for a longer period of time, at the request of the member.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** I appreciate that response. I know the minister recognizes that we're talking about primarily low-income wage earners here with very few other opportunities, in terms of employment, available for them.

The Minister of Agriculture and I were recently at the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus, where they indicated that in our region we've lost almost 12,000 jobs in the last 24 months. So the refurbishment of these centres, in my view, can either wait until the economy improves, or perhaps you could look at doing it on a more gradual basis that doesn't incur such significant job losses.

Minister, I'm heartened by your response that you're going to do, hopefully, the right thing here and ensure that these families are not thrown onto the unemployment lines and welfare rolls.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** It is very understandable that the member has that as a primary concern, and so he should and does on so many occasions.

We are indeed endeavouring to see if there's an opportunity to extend the interim time in which these sites can remain open. Unfortunately, some of the oil companies have indicated that they are not interested in continuing. So we have a request for a proposal out there. The Ministry of Transportation is working with Infrastructure Ontario to try to refurbish and provide brand new sites on the same location. It does require remedial work, but I am attempting to comply with the desire of



the member to see if there's a longer period of time that we can extend these to look at the entire situation in view of the fact that we have very challenging economic times across the province, including in his area.

1120

#### NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Ma question est pour la ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires. Minister, you will know that in northern Ontario, if you need to travel for medical care that's more than 100 kilometres away, you get the northern health travel grant. You will also know, as you're the minister, that if somebody is on ODSP, the person who is on the disability support program is able to get an advance if they don't have the cash to travel in order to attend their medical appointments. Can you tell me why some ODSP recipients receive travel payments that are less than what the ODSP program provides?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Thank you very much. That's a good question. I would like to have more detail, and I will get back to you about this, because usually it's evaluated by our official up there, and then they decide if they will provide the money in advance or if they will reimburse. This is a local decision and each case is reviewed individually.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Let me give you one case in particular. I have a constituent by the name of Daniel in my riding who had to travel to Sudbury three times for medical appointments from the city of Timmins. He received a \$480 advance from ODSP, but ODSP was reimbursed \$700 by the northern travel grant, not giving him the difference. Can you tell me why ODSP hangs on to the surplus and doesn't give it directly to the person who did the travelling?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** No, I cannot answer that question because it's an individual question. I'd like to have all the details, and I will provide you the reason why. I don't understand why, if they were reimbursed \$700, they only reimbursed this individual \$400. It may be a mistake or there may be a good reason for that, but I'll get you the answer. Thank you very much.

#### RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

**Mr. David Zimmer:** My question is for the Minister of Research and Innovation. There is a phenomenal shift taking place around the idea of energy conservation and security in the United States as the Obama administration comes into office. As we hear of the substantial investments in renewable and efficiency energy projects the Obama administration is preparing, I am concerned about how well Ontario is positioned to be a part of this shift in the United States.

Many companies right here in Toronto are at the leading edge of renewable and efficient energy produc-

tion. One such company is Regen. Their technology is used for electrical demand management and remote facility automation services for commercial and industrial consumers. The technology is low-cost, easy to install, operations-free, and its intended goal is to reduce energy usage.

Minister, what is our government doing to ensure that companies like Regen are in the best position to market their technology as the—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. Minister of Innovation, response?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I want to thank my friend from Willowdale for the question. I couldn't agree more: There is a tremendous global opportunity for clean technologies and for demand management of electricity consumption. A company here in Ontario, Regen, was successful in receiving up to \$500,000 from the investment accelerator fund. First of all, I want to thank our delivery partners, OCE, the Ontario Centres of Excellence, and MaRS for helping us with that program.

Regen has a novel software-hardware combination that they believe can save companies, all building owners and factories some 30% on their electricity. It is a great example that we have a company right here in Toronto that will be able to capitalize on a growing US market because of the election of President Obama. It's part of what we're doing in our Ministry of Research and Innovation: making sure that when there are great opportunities around the globe that are arising for clean technology, our companies can—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you, Minister. Supplementary?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Green technology is more than simply energy use. Access to fresh water will become hugely important in the 21st century. We've got to find ways to use less water and to use water more efficiently.

A Toronto company that is tackling this challenge is Echologics Engineering. Echologics is a leader in the development of acoustic technologies for the detection and location of leaks in fluid-delivery pipelines. They develop technologically advanced leak detection systems that are available for a spectrum of uses. The flagship product, LeakfinderRT, is a collaborative effort between Echologics and the National Research Council of Canada to enable them to detect leaks in pipes while still buried underground, leading to more efficient water use.

Minister, what are we doing here in Ontario to ensure that we're fostering companies like Echologics that will face today's global challenges and create the jobs of tomorrow?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I can share with the House that Ontario is considered a jurisdiction that is at the cutting edge when it comes to water technology. Echologics, another company that we are investing up to \$500,000 in, is a great example of that.

It's based on an interesting principle. I think we'll all remember that back in the days of rail, they used to say that if you put your ear on the rail, you could hear the train coming before you could see it. It's that exact same



acoustical principle that's being used with this company. They actually send sound waves through the pipe to hear whether or not there's a leak. There are vast quantities of water that are lost in our public infrastructure because of undetected leaks. Of course, right now, the only way to do it is to actually dig up the road and to try to find the leak. This way they're able to use this new cutting-edge technology to determine where those leaks are and to be able to deal with that. That allows us to conserve water, our most precious of resources. It's an Ontario company, right here in Toronto, that is leading the world. That's why we're so proud to invest in that company, Echologics.

### SKILLS TRAINING

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** My question is for my colleague the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Minister, your government's Second Career strategy program has let down a deserving Ontarian in Waterloo. He's a 45-year-old man and father of three. He was employed for 20 years in the tool and die automotive industry, but he was laid off last year. At his own expense, he proactively enrolled in a training program as a commercial pilot because he was already licensed as a private pilot. He has now—good news—received a written offer of full employment from a Kitchener company, provided that he complete the 46 flight hours required by their insurance company. He has no benefits. The money has run out. He's applied for funding to the Second Career program, but he was denied. Can you explain why he might have been denied funding?

**Hon. John Milloy:** I thank my colleague for the question. I think she would recognize the fact that, based upon a 90-second question, which is the basis for question period here, I can't give an analysis on the case that's brought forward. I am very pleased to hear that the gentleman is moving forward to receive employment, and I'd be happy, if she sent the details, to look into it.

I've been very pleased to reiterate what the Premier said: that, since Second Career came into being in June, we've had 4,000 people come forward and have a multitude of success stories of people who have gone back to community colleges and private career colleges and on their way to transitioning. At the same time, again, as the Premier pointed out, Employment Ontario has a range of services and programs, both short-term and long-term, for individuals. We'll continue to work with everyone, including the constituent that she mentioned, to make sure that we help them transition back into the workforce.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Here is a gentleman who has been very proactive. He had a transferable skill. He has invested his own time and his own money into expanding his job opportunities, and certainly I would send you his case. I would ask that you review it, and hopefully you can support him in order that he can take on this well-paying job that would allow him to support his three children and his family.

**Hon. John Milloy:** As I said, I'm happy to look into any case that's brought forward by members of the Legislature. But again, I think it is worth reiterating the fact that Employment Ontario has a whole menu of services and supports that are available for laid-off individuals. Although Second Career is a high-profile program, there are a number of other programs that are available to individuals. Second Career is not for everyone who is looking to get back into the workforce.

I'd remind members about the Ontario skills development program, which is a more short-term program. Last year, 12,000 people participated in that program. I'll remind members about the rapid re-employment and training service, which goes into cases of major layoffs. Last year, it supported 53,000 laid-off workers. I can remind members about the job creation partnerships: 1,203 job creation partnerships have been given out in the last year to provide unemployed job seekers with work experience that will lead to long-term employment.

### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Premier. The Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services pledged that the McGuinty government would leave no stone unturned in answering all the questions about the March 2006 murder of eight-year-old Jared Osidacz by his father. Why isn't domestic violence being considered in the context of the coroner's inquest that will begin on March 2?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I want to say to my colleague that I appreciate the question and I can only speculate in this regard. I'm assuming that the coroner has responsibility for scoping the inquest and can make a determination as to what is a consideration and what is not a consideration. The assumption that I'm making is that that decision rests exclusively with the coroner's office.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, the Premier might be interested to know that Dr. Peter Jaffe, a highly respected expert for his government, was commissioned to write the report for the inquest. Dr. Jaffe's thoughtful report clearly linked the horrific domestic violence against Jared's mother in 2002 to the child violence that resulted in Jared's untimely and tragic death four years later, but the coroner is not allowing that crucial evidence to be presented. After pledging to leave no stone unturned, why is this government allowing the coroner to quash the most crucial aspects of the death of Jared Osidacz at his father's hands?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I express, on behalf of all members of the Legislature, our sympathies to the family affected by this terrible tragedy. To remind my colleagues, as well, of some of the steps that we have taken, we have supported Kevin and Jared's Law and enacted it in 2006. We are both honouring and following this legislation. We are doing more for victims than any previous government. I won't get into the list of things that are in here, but it brings me back to, I think, the



essence of my colleague's question. Again, I think this is something that is properly within the purview of the coroner; I'll seek to confirm that. But I don't believe that we have the authority to influence when an inquest is going to be held, how it's going to be held, and, in particular, the scoping or terms of reference which a coroner is going to adopt, but I will confirm that for my colleague.

### HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I have a question today for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. I know that many Ontarians are looking for access to family health care. It's an issue that my constituents always talk to me about. I am sure that many other members of this House have had similar experiences.

Ontarians were intrigued to read an article in the Star yesterday. It outlined a new program that is going to help connect unattached patients with a family health care provider. I'm asking that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care tell the House more about the program and explain the ways in which Ontarians who need access to health care can benefit from it.

**Hon. David Caplan:** I want to thank the member from Oakville not only for the question, but for his tremendous advocacy to ensure that Ontarians have access to family health care.

I am extremely excited about the program, which we'll hear a great deal about in coming weeks, called Health Care Connect. It's a unique, made-in-Ontario solution. As far as I am aware, no other jurisdiction is attempting to do what we are. In 2007, during the election campaign, we committed to Ontarians to help another half a million Ontario families find a family doctor. Our new program, Health Care Connect, will help us to make this happen.

Starting next month, our telephone hotline will help to link unattached patients with a family health care provider. By dialing the special 1-800 number, Ontarians will be able to let a Telehealth staff member know that they are looking for a doctor. A nurse known as a "care connector" will then try to match the unattached patient with a family health care provider who is accepting patients. This strategy will help more Ontarians be able to access family health care and help us track the number of patients who are looking for family health care—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you, Minister.

Deferred votes: There are none.

This House will recess until 3 of the clock.

*The House recessed from 1134 to 1500.*

### HOUSE SITTINGS

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I wish to advise that pursuant to standing order 8(e), there is no business to be called during orders of the

day tomorrow morning and the House should accordingly meet at 10:30 a.m.

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Paul Miller:** It's my privilege to welcome York University graduate students and members of CUPE 3903: Imola Ilyes, Nick Fenn, Susan Dieleman, Vanessa Lehan, Ross Sweeney, Andrew Hryhorowych, Justin Cholette, Jason Breen, Marianna Azar and Hilary Martin. Welcome.

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### BY-ELECTION IN HALIBURTON-KAWARTHA LAKES— BROCK

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** On January 9, my colleague Laurie Scott unselfishly announced she was stepping aside in her riding of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock to allow our leader, John Tory, to run in a by-election in that riding. Since then, Premier McGuinty has promised the constituents of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock and all Ontarians that he would call a speedy by-election. As usual, Mr. McGuinty has failed to live up to his promise. Today, I ask Mr. McGuinty for his definition of "speedy." It has been three weeks since he agreed to call a speedy by-election. He continues to delay.

The York University strike is currently in its 12th week. My colleague Peter Shurman of Thornhill introduced back-to-work legislation almost two months ago. Mr. McGuinty's version of a speedy resolution has 2.5 million instruction days lost. I doubt the students and families of York University take comfort in Mr. McGuinty's version of speedy.

Today I am asking Mr. McGuinty to redefine "speedy" and to not continue the delay in the best interests of Ontarians for his own personal ambitions. Mr. McGuinty, find the courage to call the by-election in Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock immediately.

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I would like to read an e-mail I received from a York University student.

"Dear Mr. Shurman:

"I personally have lost out on my dream opportunity because of the consequences of this strike. This is my last semester of studies at York and I was set to graduate next spring. I had been chosen for an internship at NBC studios in New York, provided I completed my studies this term. This week I had no other choice but to turn down the opportunity and allow someone else to take it as it would have been unfair for me to accept it under these circumstances. I doubt an opportunity like this will

present itself again and I truly regret moving from BC to Ontario to attend York. I have shared my story with York administration. They told me I shouldn't have banked on 'tomorrow coming.' The union has also been unsympathetic to me. The NDP party has sent replies telling me I am wrong to not support the union, and the Liberal Party has not replied...."

This is just one of the hundreds of letters that I have received with stories like this. I could stand up here every day for the rest of my term and read a story from a student or a parent who has been negatively affected by the McGuinty government's inaction. This is a person who did not leave Ontario to go to another province, which is what we hear so often. This is a person who came to Ontario to get their education here. Look at what the other two parties have done to this student's future. You should be ashamed of yourselves.

### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Yesterday, I stood in this House and I quoted something that I think many people have seen in the past but seldom read. It is the top of the editorial page of the *Globe and Mail*. It's a quote from Junius. It's more than 2,000 years old. The quote is, "The subject who is truly loyal to the Chief Magistrate will neither advise nor submit to arbitrary measures."

I have received dozens of calls, thanks to Ms. Blizzard of the *Toronto Sun*. But I ask humbly: How do the *Toronto Sun* and this government address the legality of the legislation? How does this government or the *Toronto Sun* have evidence of a clear deadlock? How does this government or the *Toronto Sun* have proof that will satisfy the legal requirements in the landmark case of the health workers versus British Columbia? Is there any evidence that all of the processes have been used?

Two hours ago I did learn something, and that is, following the call from Howard Hampton, the Premier has called the sides together; bargaining has resumed. Let us hope that saner heads prevail. Let us hope the students get back to class. Let us hope that Christina Blizzard and the *Toronto Sun* ask its readers to thank all of the members of the Legislature for putting the issue before us.

### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I am making this statement on behalf of York students in my riding who are excluded from the process but are drastically impacted. We have 50,000 innocent victims who watch the posturing of the two sides in this dispute and the posturing of politicians while their academic futures hang by a thread, their finances disintegrate and the emotional toll creates anger and despair.

One of my constituents writes: "I'm a single parent of two kids, a part-time worker and a full-time student at York U.

"Of the 50,000 students at York" University, "over 9,000 of us are over the age of 25, and many thousands have children to support.

"As you are aware, York" University "is the nearest university for members of our community. The ongoing strike has been devastating to me and my family in terms of finances and plans for 2009.

"I paid my tuition fees for 2009 and I expect the 13-week terms and uncompressed exam periods that I paid for. This strike has been very distressing. I feel that a compressed schedule will negatively impact on how I can perform." She asks that I vote for back-to-work legislation.

When I cast a vote in this chamber that will bring an end to this strike, the two sides will go back to life as before. It will be those 50,000 people who struggle to cope with the academic and financial costs, those 50,000 who are not represented at the bargaining table, those 50,000 who are the victims of the process.

### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Charles Sousa:** I rise today to offer my support for getting our York University students back to class as soon as possible.

Some of the toughest calls I have been making these past weeks are to parents and students in my riding who are affected by the strike. Students are anxious and worried about their year, about their summer jobs and about their future. Parents are concerned that their children are losing valuable time and opportunity to get ahead. They want the strike to end now.

While I support and respect collective bargaining, the deadlock at York has negatively affected too many people. Negotiations have reached an impasse, and it comes at the expense of our students.

Given that all other options have been exhausted, we in this House have a responsibility to step in. Forty-five thousand students are in clear danger of losing their year, and we must think of them.

I do not offer my support lightly. I still believe in the collective bargaining process and that it deserves every opportunity to succeed. After all, the best settlement is a negotiated settlement agreed to by both parties. But it has become clear, after every attempt to resolve the dispute has failed, that a settlement is out of reach in this situation. This is simply not acceptable to anyone.

This is a difficult decision, one that is not made easily. However, in these tough economic times we need everyone at their best. We simply cannot afford to have 45,000 of our brightest young people sitting idle. I encourage all my colleagues to help us to put a swift end to the strike so that our students can get back to class.

### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Since the labour dispute at York University began 78 days ago, my office has been overwhelmed by phone calls, faxes and e-mails from students



and parents suffering from the strike. I do respect a well-functioning collective bargaining process. However, the recent deadlock has put the academic year for York's 50,000 students in jeopardy. With no reasonable prospect of a negotiated settlement, the McGuinty government's back-to-work legislation is an urgent necessity.

1510

On January 21, I received a letter from my Willowdale constituent Mr. John Richardson, whose daughter is a fourth-year student at York University. He writes:

"With every day of delay in ending the strike, there is increasing risk that" my daughter's "graduation will be delayed so long that her applications to teachers' colleges in" the fall of "2009 will receive no consideration."

This is a tragedy. Bill 145 represents the McGuinty government's dedication to education and our determination not to stand by while the ongoing dispute puts the academic year at risk.

In these challenging economic times, the need for a well-educated workforce is clear. Ontario must remain competitive. We cannot afford to delay the education of 50,000 of Ontario's best and brightest young people. It's for these reasons that I support back-to-work legislation.

## PETITIONS

### TUITION

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** I have a petition from the Canadian Federation of Students to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas undergraduate tuition fees in Ontario have increased by 195% since 1990 and are the third-highest in all of the provinces in Canada; and

"Whereas average student debt in Ontario has skyrocketed by 250% in the past 15 years to over \$25,000 for four years of study; and

"Whereas international students pay three to four times more for the same education, and domestic students in professional programs such as law or medicine pay as much tuition as \$20,000 per year; and

"Whereas 70% of new jobs require post-secondary education, and fees reduce the opportunity for many low- and middle-income families while magnifying barriers for aboriginal, rural, racialized and other marginalized students; and

"Whereas Ontario currently provides the lowest per capita funding for post-secondary education in Canada, while many countries fully fund higher education and charge little or no fees for college and university; and

"Whereas public opinion polls show that nearly three quarters of Ontarians think the government's Reaching Higher framework for tuition fee increases of 20% to 36% over four years is unfair;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, support the Canadian Federation of Students' call to immediately drop tuition fees to 2004 levels and petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to introduce a new framework that:

"(1) Reduces tuition and ancillary fees annually for students;

"(2) Converts a portion of every student loan into a grant; and

"(3) Increases per student funding above the national average."

I will sign that.

### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas enacting back-to-work legislation for CUPE 3903 sets a devastating precedent for the hard-won right to collectively bargain across this and other sectors; and

"Whereas workers have a right to collectively bargain and the employer has the duty to come to the table and negotiate in good faith;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to vote against back-to-work legislation and send a strong signal of this Legislature's commitment to the collective bargaining process and to reject back-to-work legislation as a bargaining strategy employed by the administration at York University."

I absolutely agree with this and will affix my signature, and give it to William.

### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas negotiations to end the strike between York University and CUPE 3903 have reached a deadlock; and

"Whereas the strike has kept almost 50,000 students out of class for weeks; and

"Whereas the NDP is blocking attempts by the government to get students back in class and learning again; and

"Whereas the NDP's actions are harming the education of York University students and are a slap in the face to parents and students; and

"Whereas students and parents are concerned the NDP's continuing opposition to resolving the strike could threaten the academic year for York University students;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ontario New Democratic Party put students and education ahead of ideology and politics, immediately stop their attempts to prolong the York University strike, and support legislation to end the strike."

I will be delighted to affix my signature to this petition, as I agree wholeheartedly.

### MULTIPLE MYELOMA

**Mr. Paul Miller:** To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Health Canada has approved the use of Revlimid for patients with multiple myeloma, an incurable form of cancer; and

"Whereas Revlimid is a vital new treatment and must be accessible to all patients in Ontario for this life-threatening cancer of the blood cells; and

"Whereas multiple myeloma is treatable with the proper therapies, thereby giving hope to the 2,000 Canadians diagnosed annually;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Immediately provide Revlimid as a choice for patients with multiple myeloma and their health care providers in Ontario through public funding."

I agree with this petition and affix my name to it.

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas negotiations to end the strike between York University and CUPE 3903 have reached a deadlock; and

"Whereas the strike has kept almost 50,000 students out of class for weeks; and

"Whereas the NDP is blocking attempts by the government to get the students back in class and learning again; and

"Whereas the NDP's actions are harming the education of York University students and are a slap in the face to parents and students; and

"Whereas students and parents are concerned the NDP's continuing opposition to resolving the strike could threaten the academic year for York University students;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ontario New Democratic Party put students and education ahead of ideology and politics, immediately stop their attempts to prolong the York University strike, and support legislation to end the strike."

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I have a petition that reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas enacting back-to-work legislation for CUPE 3903 sets a devastating precedent for the hard-won right to collectively bargain across this and other sectors; and

"Whereas workers have a right to collectively bargain and the employer has the duty to come to the table and negotiate in good faith;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to vote against back-to-work legislation and send a strong signal of this Legislature's commitment to the collective bargaining process and to reject back-to-work legislation as a bargaining strategy employed by the administration at York University."

I am in agreement and would affix my signature thereto.

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I have a petition from my constituents to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas negotiations to end the strike between York University and CUPE 3903 have reached a deadlock; and

"Whereas the strike has kept almost 50,000 students out of class for weeks; and

"Whereas the NDP is blocking attempts by the government to get the students back in class and learning again; and

"Whereas the NDP's actions are harming the education of York University students and are a slap in the face to parents and students; and

"Whereas students and parents are concerned the NDP's continuing opposition to resolving the strike could threaten the academic year for York University students;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ontario New Democratic Party put students and education ahead of ideology and politics, immediately stop their attempts to prolong the York University strike, and support legislation to end the strike."

I agree with the petition and I will add my signature.

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas enacting back-to-work legislation for CUPE 3903 sets a devastating precedent for the hard-won right to collectively bargain across this and other sectors; and

"Whereas workers have a right to collectively bargain and the employer has the duty to come to the table and negotiate in good faith;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to vote against back-to-work legislation and send a strong signal of this Legislature's commitment to the collective bargaining process and to reject back-to-work legislation as a bargaining strategy employed by the administration at York University."

I certainly agree with this and will affix my signature thereto and give it to usher Kalin.

1520

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas negotiations to end the strike between York University and CUPE 3903 have reached a deadlock; and

"Whereas the strike has kept almost 50,000 students out of class for weeks; and

"Whereas the NDP is blocking attempts by the government to get the students back in class and learning again; and

"Whereas the NDP's actions are harming the education of York University students, and are a slap in the face to parents and students; and



"Whereas students and parents are concerned the NDP's continuing opposition to resolving the strike could threaten the academic year for York University students;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ontario New Democratic Party put students and education ahead of ideology and politics, immediately stop their attempts to prolong the York University strike, and support legislation to end the strike."

I sign this petition.

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Stay tuned; this one is different.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We, the students of York University, strongly recommend that you drop this back-to-work legislation and order the York administration back to the bargaining table in good faith.

"We believe that this legislation is a slippery slope for all university sector employees' right to collective bargaining. We have faith that you will pressure York to come up with a good agreement, and fast, because we want to get back to class" too. We request that not only will you intervene, but" that you "do so in a way that reflects good governance.

"Prove yourselves as rightly fit to govern, respectful of democracy and, most of all, respectful of the collective bargaining process by calling on a new, non-partisan mediator—it is not too late" to do that.

"We support the right of workers to collectively bargain, and see that the only enemy in this process has been the York administration and its board of governors, which include many cabinet members from the Harris years.

"We request that, if the government wants a quick end to this strike, two things have to happen:

"(1) That they appoint a non-partisan mediator to spend the next few days working out a contract that reflects a decent living wage and job security;

"(2) That they appoint a team of accountants to overview York's budget and see how York is mismanaging our tuition dollars by not putting our dollars toward the education of the students."

I agree with this petition and hereby affix my name to it.

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas negotiations to end the strike between York University and CUPE 3903 have reached a deadlock; and

"Whereas the strike has kept almost 50,000 students out of class for weeks; and

"Whereas the NDP is blocking attempts by the government to get the students back in class and learning again; and

"Whereas the NDP's actions are harming the education of York University students, and are a slap in the face to parents and students; and

"Whereas students and parents are concerned the NDP's continuing opposition to resolving the strike could threaten the academic year for York University students;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ontario New Democratic Party put students and education ahead of ideology and politics, immediately stop their attempts to prolong the York University strike, and support legislation to end the strike."

I agree with this, and as a former professor and educator myself, I put my signature on this petition.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: The petition that has been read in the Legislature cannot be answered by the third party. It is to be addressed and must be answered by a government minister. I think that it is clearly out of order.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Actually, the table is supposed to receive those petitions before. I don't know whether it's been stamped, but the table will review the petition.

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have a petition to the 'Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas enacting back-to-work legislation for CUPE 3903 sets a devastating precedent for the hard-won right to collectively bargain across this and other sectors; and

"Whereas workers have a right to collectively bargain and the employer has the duty to come to the table and negotiate in good faith;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to vote against back-to-work legislation and send a strong signal of this Legislature's commitment to the collective bargaining process and to reject back-to-work legislation as a bargaining strategy employed by the administration at York University."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and send it to the table with page Kalin.

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas negotiations to end the strike between York University and CUPE 3903 have reached a deadlock; and

"Whereas the strike has kept almost 50,000 students out of class for weeks; and

"Whereas the NDP is blocking attempts by the government to get the students back in class and learning again; and

"Whereas the NDP's actions are harming the education of York University students and are a slap in the face to parents and students; and

"Whereas students and parents are concerned the NDP's continuing opposition to resolving the strike could

threaten the academic year for York University students;”—

**Mr. Michael Prue:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I think this is the same petition and I wonder whether this petition has been vetted by the table?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Is the petition stamped by the table?

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** It's not, Speaker.

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Just a moment. We're dealing with one here. I remind all members that petitions are supposed to be initialled by the table. So if you have a petition that hasn't been authorized by the table, I would ask that you not read it.

Your point of order, member from Oshawa.

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** According to the rules, there is no specific statement that says that the petition which is being read has to be identified as being stamped prior to being read. This would be a change of the rules at this particular time.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I think you should review the standing orders, but there is a requirement that it be authorized.

Now, the time for petitions has expired.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### YORK UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTES RESOLUTION ACT, 2009

#### LOI DE 2009 SUR LE RÈGLEMENT DES CONFLITS DE TRAVAIL À L'UNIVERSITÉ YORK

Resuming the debate adjourned on January 26, 2009, on the motion for second reading of Bill 145, An Act to resolve labour disputes between York University and Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 3903 / Projet de loi 145, Loi visant à régler les conflits de travail entre l'Université York et la section locale 3903 du Syndicat canadien de la fonction publique.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** In yesterday's orders of the day, the member for Parkdale-High Park had concluded her comments, and we will, then, entertain comments and questions.

The member for Eglinton-Lawrence.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I look forward to voting on this bill as soon as possible.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I, too, hope that we will be able to vote on this bill as quickly as possible.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I'd like to thank the member for her presentation yesterday. It was well thought, well researched—mind you, it kind of fell on deaf ears because there was no response other than from us, which seems to be the order of the day, so to speak.

In reference to the third party's comments about getting on with this—I was quite shocked yesterday when the member from Thornhill stood up and waved his union card—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Paul Miller:** —waved his union card in front of me. I suggested he might want to rip it up or burn it, because I really don't think that he is giving the position of the unions. I think it's more of a right-wing thing that he is doing. So I'm quite shocked that he would stand up and wave his card in front of us, because I don't know how anyone who could be a union member would have a card that says he's a member of a union and vote against collective bargaining. That's unbelievable.

So, in that order, I would also like to say that I am very proud of our caucus for standing up for the students and the workers at York. I believe, at the end of the day, that we will be proven right when it's challenged in court and it's overturned, from the BC Supreme Court order. I will be glad to remind everyone in the House who the only people were who stood up for working people in this province.

1530

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Paul Miller:** That will—as they say, it will come back, and this gentleman says we're delaying it. I guess we're delaying democracy; I don't know what he means. I guess we're delaying the fact—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Order.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** —that people don't have a right to say anything. They want to bury it. They want to bury it and they want to bury it. We're the only party—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** It's my pleasure to make some remarks on the excellent words of my colleague from the riding of Parkdale-High Park yesterday afternoon. I look forward, in fact, in a very few brief moments to being able to make my own comments on the record in regard to the way that this government is treating the workers, particularly at York University.

The member from Parkdale-High Park was very passionate in her remarks yesterday. She laid out quite a clear review of the issues before this Legislature, but also the issues before, I think, the people of Ontario. The issues that she laid out quite clearly indicate that in this province, workers have a right to collectively bargain. They have a right to negotiate with their employer until a settlement is reached. In fact, Supreme Court decisions have also indicated that there is a very narrow focus whereby those rights are set aside. Those circumstances do not occur in this particular case; in this particular case, those circumstances are not in play. Therefore, we know that the union will likely be taking other action against



this government because they have taken a high hand, a high and inappropriate hand—

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** A heavy hand.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** —a heavy hand that takes away the constitutional rights of workers: the constitutional rights of workers to bargain with their employer and come to a negotiated settlement. What this government is prepared to do over the next couple of days is to impose on these workers and their management an agreement through arbitration that is not negotiated. So you tell me, members across the House—government members and members of the opposition—what kind of atmosphere are you setting up in that place of higher learning for those workers and those students? It will not be a pleasant place for anyone, and it is shameful that this government is not prepared to protect the rights of workers in this province and so easily sets them aside.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The member for Parkdale–High Park, you have two minutes to respond.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's my privilege to stand, and to stand with the collective bargaining process, to stand with the members of CUPE 3903, who have braved this strike for over 80 days now, to stand with the members of CUPE 3903, who dropped all of their salary demands, by the way, in the last round of negotiated, if we can call it that, bargaining—it was one-sided because York never showed up to the bargaining table—who dropped everything but simply asked for some job security where York is actually offering a rollback of job security.

My husband is a contract faculty teacher and he was in the doctoral program at York University. He thought that his graduate degrees would actually count for some benefits, for some job security, would actually count, when teaching in an academic environment, to have a job where you don't have to reapply for the same job year in, year out, year in.

We in the NDP, those in CUPE 3903 and the Canadian Federation of Students are standing for students. We're standing for a valued degree from an institution that should be valued for the degrees it offers. It is not a valued degree if the person who receives that degree gets less in benefits than a Tim Hortons worker and has to reapply for an academic professorship every single year, where 52% of the teaching is done by students, TAs, contract faculty who receive a bit over 7% of the university's budget. That's not fair. That's not a valued degree. That's not fair for students.

We stand for education. We want to get the students back. But certainly the York administration has been bargaining in bad faith. This is not a deadlock; this is bargaining in bad faith, and the Liberal Party has stood behind those who bargain in bad faith. You, my friends, are strikebreakers.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** It's my pleasure and privilege to make some remarks on the record today in regards to the back-to-work legislation that the government has put

in front of us forcing the workers of CUPE Local 3903 back to work when, in fact, what they should be doing is allowing the workers their democratic right to bargain collectively with their employer until a settlement has been reached. I say that because it's very clear that this government, in their heavy-handed approach, is taking the wrong path. It's taking the wrong path for these workers and it's taking the wrong path for all workers in Ontario.

But first, I want to talk a little bit about the fact that everyone in this chamber, regardless of which party, which side you're on, acknowledges and recognizes that this a difficult time for everyone involved. It's a difficult time for the families; a difficult time for the students, absolutely, and their parents; a difficult time for the workers who are trying to get a fair deal out of the university. It's a difficult time all the way around. People are worried about whether they're going to be able to get their year, whether they're going to be able to be competitive in terms of—

*Interruption.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I've never seen that in all my years.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I think this is a message. I believe the falling of the mace is a signal that democracy is being crushed in this very chamber today.

The reality is that within this context of hardships there are certain things that we have to acknowledge. What we have to know is that in this province, in this country, workers have a right to negotiate. They have a right to join unions and they have a right to negotiate collectively so that they can get from their employers, who have—and this is regardless of what sector you're in, public sector, private sector—the greatest amount of power in an employment relationship. The only power that workers have is their power to withdraw their labour in order to be able to get a settlement that is fair and just with their employer. That's exactly what the situation is before us. There has been a process of negotiations that have been undertaken for many months. In fact, interestingly enough, members of the government side would like us to believe that the process of negotiations that has been going on has been arduous, has been lengthy in terms of the amount of actual time that negotiations have been ongoing. The physical calendar time may have been significant, but the actual amount of time that the university has deigned to bargain with this bargaining unit is about 11 days. In fact, much of the time prior to the Christmas break was wasted. Only four times did the university sit down with the bargaining unit to negotiate prior to the Christmas break. Already, you have to think, how serious is this management group? How serious is this employer, if it's not prepared to put its nose to the grindstone and hammer out an agreement with its workers, if it's only prepared to come to the table four meagre times?

Nothing happened during the break, of course. A couple of weeks went by; no negotiations, nothing happening. After the break, apparently there were a couple



more attempts at bargaining. But it became very clear over the process that the university had a card up its sleeve, and the card wasn't a joker, but it was like a joker. It was a bad joke, because it was the Liberal government; that's the card that was up the university's sleeve. The Liberal government was up the university's sleeve, and they knew that they could play that card when push came to shove. And here we are: Push has come to shove, and the government of Ontario, the Liberal government, has decided that no longer do workers have a right to a negotiated settlement in Ontario. No longer do workers have that ability to bargain collectively and get a negotiated agreement with their employer. This government has decided that, regardless of the willingness of the bargaining unit to come to the table and bargain, the university can unilaterally say, "We don't care to bargain anymore. We don't want to bother anymore, so please, government, help us out. Give us a break, and legislate these workers back to work so that the students can get back to classrooms."

It's a sad day in Ontario when we see that kind of heavy-handed action by a government, when we see a government so willing to strip the rights of workers so easily with the stroke of a pen, to say to workers, "You no longer have your constitutional right to bargain collectively and gain a contract from your employers."

1540

The government likes to say that this action is because the parties were deadlocked. We've talked about this in our remarks in the past. A deadlock happens when neither side is prepared to move. We know very clearly that that's not the situation before us. From that issue arise a number of other initiatives that I expect the union will be undertaking. That will happen, I believe, if there is no success this afternoon.

My understanding is that this afternoon parties will be getting back to the bargaining table. I really hope that they do end up with a settlement, because that would be the best outcome all the way around. In fact, that's really the only outcome that will lead to a positive result and a positive work environment and a positive learning environment when the students eventually do get back to class.

It was absolutely not the case that neither side was prepared to move in negotiations. In fact, what was the case was that the union wiped a whole bunch of their demands off the table in those last couple of hours of hard negotiating with the mediator in place. The union was prepared to move. The union moved. The union only had four items left on the table. But the university was not prepared to move. They stuck their feet in the ground and they said, "We're not moving. We're not going anywhere. We're done bargaining," because they had the card up their sleeve. They had the Liberal government up their sleeve, and they knew very well that they didn't have to bargain.

So shame on the McGuinty government for sending out those signals. Shame on you for sending the signals to the university that gave them that positioning and that

power. This strike is on your heads, the length of this strike is on your heads, and the result will be on your heads too. I hope that result will be negotiated today and over the next 24 to 48 hours. Everyone hopes that. But if it does not, you will know—and the former labour minister is listening closely. The labour minister is listening closely, because he knows very well what this means in terms of the atmosphere of labour relations in this province.

Make no mistake, and we know this: This is not the first university that's going to be going through this process. In fact today, outside at the rally, we heard from someone from the University of Toronto who said the same issues and items are on the table, the same concerns around the fact that tenured professors are retiring but universities are not providing any more tenure tracks for their instructors. We know that's happening in universities across the province. We know that instructors and professors are not being given long-term contracts. These educational workers do not know from one term to the next what they're teaching. If you look at a student's agenda of their classes, every single class under where it says "instructor" is TBA, to be announced. Why? Because the university is not providing these workers with solid, reliable work. It has all been casualized. It has all been Walmartized. They're lucky if they know from one term to another whether they're going to be teaching at all. What kind of job security is that, I ask. Who would put up with that kind of insecurity, that kind of uncertainty, in their workplace? Why would we expect these very dedicated people, these people who care so much about the role that they play in the education not only of our young people but of many other people who go to university for all kinds of different courses, to take pitiful wages that keep them below the poverty line?

Remember, many of these people who are instructors, who are part-time professors, who are doing this work, are also students. So they have the expenses of their university education as well that they have to deal with. In most cases, because they're graduate students and Ph.D. students, they have huge debts already that they're trying to cover off. So we underpay them, we give them no job security, and then, when they try to collectively bargain to improve their condition and improve the situation that they teach in, they are stripped of their rights. What kind of a message is that that a government gives to workers?

It's not only university workers. We know that this is coming up in other public sector situations as well. We will see very shortly, I'm sure, a situation where we have OPSEU workers who are going to be, perhaps, in a strike position. We'll see what the government is going to do. What it looks like is happening here now is that this government has decided unilaterally, outside of the context of Supreme Court decisions and jurisprudence, that they don't care about the constitutional rights of workers, of people in this province and in this country; they don't care. They are so arrogant that they think they have the power to simply legislate away those rights, not only for



university workers, educational workers in universities, but likely for other workers as well.

That's why it was absolutely inspiring to see, over the last little while, the solidarity that has come from the rest of the labour movement in regards to this particular strike. We've seen the Ontario Federation of Labour, we've seen the CAW, and we've seen other unions come out and support CUPE Local 3903—OPSEU and others as well.

When I was on the picket line over at York, a number of the rallies there were quite diverse in terms of the representation of the broader labour movement in Ontario, and for a really important reason: because this government is opening a can of worms here. They're opening a situation here where the labour unrest in this province is going to become severe if this government refuses to acknowledge and recognize that they have an obligation to hold up the rights of citizens, not simply toss them aside.

There are a number of specific things that the union did to come closer to the table with management, but unfortunately, because they had their card up their sleeve of a complicit government, there was no need for the university to move at all. As a result, we're here today dealing with back-to-work legislation that is not necessary.

It's going to be interesting to see how the government manages their next steps, because I suspect—and I say "I suspect" because this has been, obviously, something that has come to light already—there is going to be a challenge of this government's actions. I think it was my colleague from Beaches—East York yesterday who very eloquently set out the reality around whether or not the tests that are supposed to be met for a deadlock are actually being met in this case.

We know that there has been a Supreme Court decision. That decision recognizes collective bargaining as, and I'm going to quote, "The most significant collective activity through which freedom of association is expressed in the labour context." That's pretty important. That's a pretty important precedent that this government so easily rolls over. "The right to bargain collectively with an employer enhances the human dignity, liberty and autonomy of workers by giving them the opportunity to influence the establishment of workplace rules and thereby gain some control over a major aspect of their lives, namely their work." It goes on, of course, to talk about the difference between modern rights and fundamental freedoms, and speaks to the fact that those rights belong to workers from here on in.

That decision was in, I believe, 2007, if I'm not—yes, as a result of a 2002 decision that was taken in BC by the BC government of the time, which was trying to strip health care workers at the time of their bargaining rights. In effect, what the Supreme Court said was that they had to do a number of things: There had to be a clear deadlock in negotiations; the public interest required an exceptional temporary solution to address the matter so that a new collective agreement could be concluded.

Basically, the issue that we bring to the table is the one of deadlock, because what we have seen very clearly is that there was no deadlock, that in fact, right up until today—today, in fact, makes it even more clear that there's no deadlock, because the sides are bargaining again. So if the sides are bargaining again, where is the deadlock? That's what I'm asking, and that's what the government needs to ask itself.

1550

They put everyone in this mess, and now here we are because the government didn't do the right thing in all these months. They didn't force the university back. They didn't use the card up their other sleeve to get the university to the table. Instead, they told the university they could take a pass on the rights of workers. So, instead, we're all in limbo.

The government is going to get this legislation passed regardless, workers are going to have their rights trampled on, the labour relations atmosphere in the province is going to go down the tubes, and we're setting up an atmosphere for big trouble, I believe, over the next several months if this government continues in this wrong-headed fashion.

We're bringing these petitions forward, asking the government to back away from this legislation. It doesn't have to be passed. You don't have to call it. We can all just leave today and not have to come back tomorrow to continue debating this legislation. That would be the right thing to do: Give some more breathing space and give some more room to the parties, who apparently are starting to talk this afternoon. That would be the responsible thing, the respectful thing, for a government to do. In fact, that's probably the only way to get to a place where we can know for sure that the parties are going to be able to go back into the university and create an atmosphere of positive learning and positive instruction for the students and the teachers.

I wanted to talk about two other things very briefly. One is that the issues CUPE 3903 is fighting for are not new. In fact, I have a report that was written by a good friend of mine named Vicky Smallman. She wrote a paper back in 2004 called *Contingent Academic Work in the Canadian Context*—organizing and collective bargaining officer, Canadian Association of University Teachers. This paper that Vicky wrote clearly outlines the trend in Canadian universities, and this was like five years ago now. The trend was very clear: away from tenured professors, toward the casualization of labour, toward underfunding of universities. That's a basic fact.

All of this problem that we have in front of us now is very much related to the underfunding of our university system: The province of Ontario is 10 out of 10 in the nation. We're the 10th in terms of per capita funding for students in post-secondary in this country. What a shameful record that is, and this is the government that talks about the knowledge economy. This is the government that says we're transitioning to a knowledge economy, yet they're not doing anything to ensure that that knowledge base is being robustly supported through a



well-funded education system, through a well-funded post-secondary education system particularly.

I'm happy to share this, if you want to have a look at it. It's quite an interesting paper that set out the exact same issues five years ago that these workers are fighting for. Yes, they're fighting for their own jobs, but they're also fighting for the quality of education in this province, and they're putting on the table the reality that the quality of education in this province is going to continue to erode, with a government that's not prepared to fund its universities at the proper levels.

There's one other thing that I think members of this Legislature should have a quick look at. It was sent to me by Bob Hanke, one of our friends at CUPE 3903, and it's The CUPE 3903 Unit 2 Chronicle. It's the January 2009 edition, so it was published before this back-to-work legislation came forward. This Chronicle sets out very clearly the issues that the bargaining unit has been dealing with and the attempts to get the university to take seriously the concerns they raised at the bargaining table. I'm not going to be able to read much of it into the record—in fact, probably none at all—but I do want to thank Bob for giving it to me. I encourage members of this Legislature: If you really want to know what's happening here, if you're not just going to be blindly led like sheep on this issue, you should have a look at what this Chronicle talks about in terms of the issues that these workers are fighting for. They're not just their own issues, they're the educational issues in this province that will affect everyone. It's about quality of education and the dignity and rights of workers.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I look forward to voting on this bill as soon as possible.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I would ask that government members like the member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan read the order paper and notice that your government House leader has filed a time allocation motion, so you don't have to plead like that. Don't whimper; don't beg. The time allocation motion will allow you to vote on this at the first available opportunity.

I am grateful to my colleague from Hamilton Centre for her contribution to this discussion, and I'm proud of all of my colleagues here in the New Democratic Party caucus.

Healthy labour relations are the result of effective negotiation between the disputing parties. I have been impressed by the persistent efforts of this CUPE local to address these matters at the bargaining table. I suggest that perhaps the proper bill for the government to have brought would have been a back-to-the-table bill for the management at York University.

This government has failed miserably at encouraging, cultivating and nurturing a responsible labour relations role by York University management. Let's make that very clear.

If this government gives management the out with back-to-work legislation, then notwithstanding all of the best efforts of workers at York University, York University management will be able to maintain a poisoned, toxic and high-capacity-for-failure relationship with its workers, to the detriment of students for decades to come.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** This bill puts students back in the classroom. I look forward to supporting this bill and to voting on it as soon as possible.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Final questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I listened intently to my colleague from Hamilton Centre and she had a lot of very intelligent things to say.

At noon, there were hundreds of people out in front of the Legislature. There were hundreds of police officers to watch those hundreds of people too, but they were absolutely charming and wonderful members of our society. Most of them were under 30 years of age. They're going through considerable strain and stress around this legislation and around everything that has happened at York University over the last 11 or 12 weeks. They let up a cheer, to my friends in the Liberal Party, when it was announced that a call had gone out from Howard Hampton this morning to the Premier and that the Premier in turn had agreed to make telephone calls, and had indeed made telephone calls, both to the union and to the management at York University, and that there would be ongoing negotiations in this strike, at least in the short term. They let out a cheer because this is really all they are asking for.

I would ask the members opposite to please have someone go up to the Premier's office. Please understand that the Premier is trying to be part of the solution and not part of the problem. Ask yourselves why those who stand up here are trying to be part of the problem and not part of the solution. Are you not listening to what your leader has to say? Are you not cognizant that he is trying to do something other than force this legislation through? Maybe he's trying to do both, but at least he's giving this opportunity. Why are none of you standing up and saying that this is an opportunity that should be seized and saying something positive about what the Premier is finally trying to do? I'm asking that legitimate question. My colleague raised it. Why are none of you willing to stand up and say, "Good for the Premier"?

1600

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The honourable member for Hamilton Centre, you have up to two minutes for your response.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I thank the members for their comments. There are really some basic, fundamental issues here that New Democrats are standing for. We're standing against legislating these workers back to work. We're standing in favour of a quality, post-secondary education system in the province of Ontario. We believe



that the province is underfunding education and that that is the root of this problem, that is the root of this strike and that is the root of why these workers have to fight so hard for basic rights.

What are those basic rights? The right to a decent benefit package, the right to a decent salary, the right to know what kind of work you're going to be having within the next three to six months. It's called job security. It's not something that anybody in this chamber, I don't think, would not want to have.

We're talking about the casualization of labour in our university system. Did you know, in fact, that about 54% of the teaching that goes on in this university is done by these very workers who are on strike? And yet, only 7.5% of the annual budget of the university goes to the salaries of these workers. That's kind of the opposite of most organizations. If I recall, in most organizations, the largest cost is their labour cost. That's really the way it works. In most cases, the highest cost is labour, and you would think in a university, considering that the biggest product there is education, that, in fact, would be the largest amount of money as well. If these workers are doing the most amount of work—they have a very, very small amount of the budget—where is the budget going to? We know from the list that, like most universities, a lot of it is going to the president of the university. Right? That's where it's going.

This government needs to get its priorities straight, give these workers the dignity and respect they deserve and get this legislation off the table.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I understand that there are 50,000 students who are being affected by this strike. I wanted to talk a little about what it means to be on strike. When workers make the decision to take the vote to go on strike, they don't make that decision lightly. To go on strike means real hardship for the people on strike. It means real hardship for their families and friends. It means terrible disruptions to their way of living, but they do this because, as part of the bargaining process, they see this as the only way to change their conditions of work. It is not a decision that anybody takes lightly.

I have had the opportunity to live through a lot of strikes. My husband was on strike for nine months when his employer, International Nickel Co., refused to bargain. It was nine months of hell, nine months of relying on grocery coupons to pay for the food, nine months of missing car payments and mortgage payments. It was nine, hard months for the 20,000 people who were on strike in Sudbury for nine, long months. When they decided to go on strike, they didn't take that decision lightly; nobody does, but it was the only way to bring changes to their working conditions.

When the CUPE local made that strike vote, the people didn't take it lightly. They knew it was going to have an impact on the students. They knew it was going to have an impact on their lives, but that is part of the process. They had come to a point where the situation

could not be changed in another way, so they chose to go on strike.

I remember the strike by the nurses at the public health unit in Sudbury. Those women picketed in the worst winter of them all. Every day they went on strike in the dead of winter in Sudbury. Every day they stood out there in minus 20, minus 30. It was a winter pretty much like the winter we have now—really, really harsh. They stood out there on the picket line, lots of them new nurses, but they held on. When they made the decision to go on strike, they knew it was going to be tough. And my, did they have it tough. The weather was not keen on them. Nothing was going well, and it dragged on for months. Here again, those nurses lost their wages, they lost their way of living, and their clients certainly suffered a great deal. But that was part of the process to change what was going on within human resources. They wanted parity with the nurses at the hospital. It was quite ironic, actually, because the health unit in Sudbury shared its parking lot with one of the hospitals, so every morning you would have 1,200 nurses go into what was then Laurentian Hospital and pass those 70 or so nurses from the public health unit who were toughing it out in a very harsh northern Ontario winter to get parity with their sisters across the way. But they held on and they got a negotiated settlement that everybody could be proud of.

When they went back to work, those nurses worked like nobody could believe to make up all of the lost time and to make sure that any suffering their clients had during those months of the strike was put behind them as quickly as possible. But that was only possible because after many months of striking, they got a settlement.

I was also involved, at the Ministry of Health, actually, when the public service union went on strike. That didn't go as well. Those workers were forced back to work. The ambience within the workplace was untenable. The stress and the bad faith became an everyday occurrence. To try to do your work was almost impossible, because in order for a department to work, managers and unionized workers had to work together hand in hand. They had to collaborate. This collaboration was there no more. It was very antagonistic; it was very bitter. One part had been told that what they wanted didn't matter, it didn't count; they had to go back to work. So, humans being what we are, they brought those hard feelings back into the workplace, and it took years for the department to be functional again. It certainly made for a very unpleasant place to go to work. Lots of people left; lots of people found jobs someplace else. I was one of those people who left. I couldn't take it anymore. To go to work every day, to live the stress of people's rejection of one another, of refusal to collaborate—rightly so—was just untenable.

There are lots of people who go on strike, and we all know that it will be a hardship. We know that it has been a hardship for those 50,000 people.

Yesterday, I mentioned that after I had been at work—I was a physiotherapist—for a few years, I decided to go back to school. I decided to enroll in a master's degree. It



was not a decision that I took lightly. By that time, I had a good job, with good pay, with good benefits; I had a spouse and children. I got accepted, and I was really excited on my first day. That was September 1985. Our kids were small: three, four and six. I had the perfect plan. I had figured it all out. I had people covering my shifts at the hospital, taking my holidays, lined up with a few weeks of leave of absence that the hospital had given me. My life was scheduled like nobody could believe so that I could go back to school. On my first day at school—I'm going back to school; I'm enrolling in a master's degree; I can't wait to go there—I get to Laurentian University a little bit early, because I'm kind of excited, and there's a picket line. I can't get through. The workers have walked off the job.

1610

You can't imagine everything that went through my mind at that point. We could barely make our payments if I took that many weeks off to go to school. If this had to be extended, we were not going to make our payments. We were going to run out of money. I was going to run out of people to cover my shifts at the hospital. I was not going to be able to pay the debts I already—all of this went through my mind. And the strike keeps on going. Every day, the strike keeps on going, and it went on for weeks.

But those teachers wanted to change their working conditions. They had tried to bargain in good faith and they couldn't. So part of the process is that you take a strike vote and you go on strike. You're telling your employers how important it is for you to change.

That doesn't come freely; it comes at a cost. To our family, it came at a great cost: the cost of babysitters and shifts at the hospital and payments not made. But they negotiated a settlement. When those teachers came back, they welcomed us back with open arms. They went way beyond the call of duty to make sure that we made up those weeks of learning. We ended up stretching the terms a little bit longer. I missed some shifts at the hospital and some good friends covered for me and I was able to pay them back.

The point of the story is that they were able to work out a settlement. They were able to bargain. So when they came back, rather than the bad-faith situation I was telling you about before when people got ordered back to work, it was quite the opposite. It was, "Let's all pull in the same direction. Let's all row in the same direction and let's make sure that those kids"—and I wasn't really a kid at the time, but anyway—"those young people who want to learn have an opportunity to learn," and everybody went at it 110%. We finished our terms and I got a degree. I got a master's degree from Laurentian University that I'm very proud of.

I'm not sure I would have been as proud, or even if I would have made it, if it hadn't been a negotiated settlement. All of those extra hours of teaching, of helping me out—see, my background was in health care, but I was going into business administration. I had to make up some classes. I was the one who lagged behind; most of

my colleagues were coming from business and had a lot of knowledge that I didn't. I went and saw the teachers after classes. They helped me out. They gave me extra work to do, sure, but they also made sure that I kept up with the rest of the people in my class. They wanted me to succeed. They wanted me to succeed even more because they didn't want me to have the weight of that strike on my shoulders and they felt that they could do something to help me. The goodwill was overwhelming.

This is what we want to happen to the kids at York—I know they're not all kids—to the students and the learners at York. We want them to go back to school in a university where everybody works and gives it their 110% so that those days and weeks that you've missed can be made up by the extra help, by the extra miles that those teachers and teaching assistants, I'm sure, are going to be willing to go. This will only happen if there's a negotiated settlement.

Back-to-work legislation robs all of those students of those opportunities. Some students need the extra help, and more and more of them will need the extra help because they've already missed quite a few days. But if you go back in there—because those people are legislated back in there and hold their heads in shame—we are all human beings.

As much as the students, their families, their friends are suffering right now; as much as they see opportunity wasted; as much as they have to realize that those teachers, teachers' assistants and part-time faculty who took that vote to go on strike are also suffering, they are your key to success. Let them do fair bargaining. Let them get a bargained settlement and you will see that they will want you to thrive. They want their students to succeed. They will help you like they helped me, because this is what teachers do. Those people have been going at it for years with no job security, poor pay and no benefits. Those people wouldn't be there if it wasn't because they want to help their students learn. They would have jumped ship a long time ago. Those people are still there because they want to help the learners, they want to help their students. Give them the chance to negotiate a settlement and see how York University is going to bloom. It's going to bloom into something we're all going to be proud of.

This is what the NDP is trying to facilitate because we believe in education. We certainly believe in higher education, and we believe that those 50,000 people have registered to get an education that will give them a good job, a job with security and a job with benefits—exactly what those people are on strike for right now, exactly what they're trying to achieve for themselves.

To the 50,000 people out there, I'm sure some of them have stories that are way more compelling than mine, but I wanted to share mine with you, nevertheless, because sometimes the best-laid plan, when you think you have your life all figured out, falls apart. But you know what? In life, there will be many more times where your life will fall apart like this. I guess this is why we call it life. It is all part of life.



J'aimerais parler un peu de la position du parti néo-démocratique face aux gens qui sont présentement en grève à l'Université York. Les gens qui sont en grève ont pris un vote de grève. Ce n'est pas le genre de décision qu'on prend à la légère. Ils prennent ce genre de décision parce qu'ils se rendent compte qu'il n'y a pas moyen de faire avancer les choses pour améliorer leurs conditions de travail. Ces gens-là, depuis qu'ils ont pris le vote de grève et qu'ils ont commencé leur grève il y a maintenant 82 jours, eux aussi ont eu de la difficulté. Eux aussi ont perdu leur salaire; ils ont dû commencer à faire du piquetage. Puis laissez-moi dire que même s'ils sont à Toronto, l'hiver n'a pas été clément. Il a fait très froid et très venteux par ici.

On sait également que cela a eu un gros impact pour 50 000 apprenants de l'Université York. La plupart sont des jeunes personnes qui n'ont pas pu avoir accès à leurs cours, qui ont peur de perdre une session ou même une année complète d'université. Cela pourra avoir des effets terribles sur leur avenir.

On sait qu'une grève, c'est difficile. Mais on sait également que la meilleure façon de régler une grève est avec des négociations qui mènent à une convention collective qui a été négociée. Les gens qui sont là n'ont presque pas d'avantages sociaux. Ils ne sont vraiment pas très bien payés et ils n'ont aucune sécurité d'emploi. Mais il y a des gens qui sont là depuis deux, quatre, six, neuf ans, des professeurs qui continuent d'enseigner même dans des conditions comme ça parce qu'ils ont vraiment l'avenir de leurs étudiants et étudiantes à cœur.

1620

Si on donne une chance à ces gens-là de revenir en classe la tête haute parce qu'ils ont été capables de négocier une convention collective, je vous garantie que tout le monde va travailler très fort pour s'assurer que tous les étudiants reçoivent l'appui dont ils ont besoin pour réussir leur année. Si on les force à retourner au travail avec la loi qu'on veut passer en ce moment, ils vont retourner la tête basse et ils vont retourner dans un environnement de travail qui n'est pas vraiment idéal pour apprendre. Nous sommes tous des êtres humains. On amène avec nous notre passion pour l'éducation. Ils amènent avec eux également le fait qu'ils trouvaient que leurs conditions de travail étaient tellement intenable que la seule façon de se faire entendre était d'aller en grève. Si on les force à retourner au travail, on est en train de leur dire, « Les conditions de travail n'étaient pas si pires que ça. Retournez au travail, puis soyez contents avec ce que vous avez. »

Qu'est-ce qu'on est en train de leur dire ? On est en train de leur dire qu'eux autres, ils ne comptent pas. Pour le parti néo-démocratique, ces travailleurs-là comptent, parce que tous les travailleurs comptent. On croit en l'éducation supérieure et on veut que les 50 000 étudiants et étudiantes de York retournent à l'université le plus tôt possible dans un environnement qui va leur permettre d'apprendre, d'avoir du succès et d'obtenir leur degré. C'est ce qu'on veut, et on obtiendra ça quand on aura une convention collective qui aura été négociée par les deux

partis et qui permettra aux professeurs de revenir en classe la tête haute.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Merci. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Dave Levac:** Merci, monsieur le Président. Given the latest developments referenced in the House today, I really, truly look forward to having the students back in class as soon as possible.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I am so proud of my colleagues in the New Democratic Party, and the comments, regrettably, for about 20 minutes by our sister France Gélinas from Nickel Belt confirm that pride. What an articulate and visceral understanding of what should be happening here in this Legislature and what should be happening in the management offices of York University: an incredibly effective comprehension of what labour disputes that result in strikes—and I say this one has more characteristics of a lockout than it does a strike—what incredible impact they have on all the parties. She indicated our regret, and the regret is that at the end of the day it will be York University as an institution that will suffer for decades to come, because it hasn't been served well by its management. Potential university students and graduate students will not have York among their top three universities to go to, because they recognize that it has a history, and York management appears to want to do nothing to change that history, of very poor labour relations.

When you've got poor labour relations, you've got an unhealthy workplace, you've got a toxic workplace, you've got a poisoned workplace. You don't have a workplace in which children and youth and adult learners learn as effectively as they can. That's what our sister France Gélinas was talking about, something that the government doesn't seem to understand.

I repeat: Mr. McGuinty should have been more focused on back-to-the-table legislation for York University management than he and his caucus are on back-to-work legislation for the sessional professors at York University.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** It's time to reopen the third-largest university in this country and send the students back to the classrooms. I look forward to voting on this bill as soon as possible.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Final questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I listened intently to my colleague from Nickel Belt. As she was speaking and talking about her experiences in Sudbury, it made me think of some of my own all of those years ago as a young lad, with my father on strike and the difficulty around our family and all of the neighbours and the people I knew. The strike dragged on for a long time. As you know and as I've said many times in this Legislature, growing up in Regent Park, we were not rich people. To have your mother or



your father, or sometimes both, on strike and having no money come in was an extreme hardship, and it was never taken lightly. I remember as a young boy asking my father why he had voted to go on strike, why he was putting that at risk. It was going to be difficult for my family. He very cogently and carefully explained to me that it had to be done. It had to be done in terms of the longer-term prosperity of himself and of our family. It had to be done in order that there would be some better future. It was not a future, working in a factory, and one could aspire to do a lot of things that he had great dreams for: dreams of educating his children, dreams of getting out of Regent Park, dreams that I think most people would hold to be normal. That was why he went on strike.

Of all the strikes that have affected me in my life—I have been on strike myself as well—whether I was a striker, once, or whether I was inconvenienced by the strike, dozens and dozens of times, I have never stopped and forgotten the sacrifice that is made by the people who have no option but to choose that route. I am absolutely convinced that the people here today, the people who are walking the picket line at York University, wish they were not there, but they are doing it for a just cause, one that they believe in and, in the end, for the benefit of everyone at York University.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The honourable member for Nickel Belt, you have up to two minutes for your response.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Thank you. I'd like to thank the member from Welland, the member from Richmond Hill and the member from Beaches—East York for their comments. I also wanted to read a little e-mail I got on Facebook from a student at York:

"Hi France. I hope this message reaches you in the next 24 hours. I am a student at York University, currently in my fourth year. I have and continue to support CUPE 3903, their right to strike, and their right to resolve this dispute at the table. While I am not sure how much of an impact the NDP caucus can have on the proposed bill tomorrow afternoon, I would hope to see this caucus apply whatever pressure it can to see this bill defeated. The fundamental rights of 3,400 people should not be taken away by the influence of one individual (McGuinty) in a whip vote at Queen's Park. If you could pass this message along to" many of "your colleagues, I would appreciate it." It's signed "Justin."

I don't really know who Justin is, but what I do know is that a lot of students understand that in a strike there will be hardship, that there will be hardship on the strikers and on the people affected by this strike. Although he is a student, and I read on his Facebook page that he has great ambitions for his future, great plans for the future, all that depends on him getting his degree this year. He understands that, in order to succeed, he needs to go back to a university where the faculty, the teachers' assistants etc. are supported.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I find it sad that here we are debating a bill that deals with the fundamental rights of workers, the fundamental rights of citizens. We find ourselves in the rather sad situation that the only ones really taking the time to have a discussion about what should be happening in bargaining are members of the New Democratic Party. Both the Conservatives and Liberals have decided not to participate in the debate, as a tactic to circumvent the rights of workers, the rights of citizens, to free and collective bargaining. I find that rather sad. So I want to take the 20 minutes that I have in order to lay out what I think is the situation and what I think, what our caucus thinks and what our leader, Howard Hampton, thinks about what should be happening in this situation.

1630

First of all, let's be clear: Every worker in the province of Ontario and across this country has a right to free and collective bargaining. We have done that by way of Legislatures across our country where we have passed labour relations acts, giving workers the right, first of all, to join a union and, when they do join a union, the process of bargaining. That right has been upheld by way of our Constitution, because if you look at our Charter of Rights and Freedoms, it gives workers the right to join a union, and those rights are protected by way of—

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Freedom of assembly.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Exactly—well, a couple of ways, but the point is that our Constitution speaks very clearly on the right of workers to be able to join a union, to assemble and to do the things that these workers are trying to do.

One of the arguments that I've heard through this debate—well, through the lack of debate, by way of the non-participation on the part of the government members and the Conservative caucus. Whenever they've had a chance to speak to the media, it's to say, "Oh, my God, how terrible that New Democrats are standing in the House and they're debating this bill," and how somehow or other we're obstructing the process here in the Legislature.

I want to first of all remind members of the government and those others who are watching that we are not being dilatory. We're not ringing bells; we're not doing the types of things to try to slow down the passage of this bill. All we are doing is what we have the right and responsibility to do, which is to debate issues on the floor of the Legislature and to bring views to what the government is doing by way of this bill. That is our democratic right, but more importantly, that's the democratic right of citizens.

For members of this assembly on the government side and the Conservative side of the House, under the McGuinty government and under the Tories, to say that somehow or other this is a bad thing—I really find that offensive. At the end of the day, all of us have rights as citizens, and every person in this Legislature and everybody within our society should be protecting those rights to the ultimate degree.



We all know that democracy is not something that came easy. We all know that democracy was won—how? It was won by blood. It was won by people standing up and saying, “Enough of being under the yoke of a king or a queen” or other tyrants at the time, who didn’t have constitutional systems as we have now with Legislatures and elected bodies. People basically took to the streets; people went out and picked up guns, unfortunately, and defended their rights as citizens in their society.

On November 11, I, as every other member of this assembly does, gather at some cenotaph somewhere where I listen to the Premier. I’ve listened to the Prime Ministers of this country over the years and others say how the God-given right we’ve got to democracy is so sacrosanct and how much we should thank those who fought in wars to protect that right. I take that seriously. But the first chance that they got, they ran back into the Legislature and they said: “To heck with those rights. We think it’s a bit uncomfortable and a bit cumbersome to give workers rights. Therefore we’ll pass a bill to get rid of those rights, and everything will be fine because we care about students.”

Well, my friends, yes, we care about students—all of us in this House. Most of all, those teachers’ aides and others who are on the picket line care about students, as my good friend France Gélinas pointed out in the speech she made earlier. But if you care about students, you should also care that they get the education they require, and that means that yes, people need to be treated fairly, they need to be compensated properly for the work that they do. And more importantly, you need to have an atmosphere within the university or school or wherever it might be so that these people, when they come to work, feel valued, are supported by their administration and are able to do the work that they love to do—and they do every day—in a way that makes sense for them as workers and works for the people who are learning.

For this government to say, “Oh, this is all about students”—I want to remind you, if it’s about students, we would be worried about making sure that these workers are well treated so that they have the ability to provide the type of service that they want to provide to the students at York University and, later, in other universities across this province.

The government has a responsibility. It’s really interesting. You listen to the government and they say, “Oh, this is all the fault of the union. These workers, they’re getting in the way. They’re walking on picket lines. They’re unreasonable.”

“They don’t want to negotiate” is the argument of the government. Well, we know what has happened. The union sat down, as a process of collective bargaining, and tried to negotiate a collective agreement with their employer. The employer has known all the way along that all they had to do was sit and wait it out, and what’s going to happen? Dalton McGuinty would come running in with a white horse and bring in legislation to order the workers back to work. Why would the employer—in this case, York University—take the process of bargaining

seriously if they know at the end of the day the government is going to legislate the workers back to work? As the strike progressed longer and longer, it became clearer and clearer at the bargaining table—or lack of a bargaining table—that in fact it would become more and more likely that the government would order the workers back to work, because they had people like Mr. Shurman and others leading the charge in order to take the rights of workers away.

I just say, the government had a responsibility and they didn’t take it. The fundamental problem was this: One, the university system is not properly funded. We are number 10 across this country when it comes to the level of funding that universities get. That’s important for this debate, because it means that the university is not able, to the degree that they would like, to meet the requirements at the bargaining table that the union has put in the way of proposals to the employer.

So the government sits back and says, “It’s the fault of the union. That bad Sid Ryan. Those bad CUPE members and others.” Well, who is really responsible for the universities? It’s the government of Ontario. We fund the bulk of the money they’ve got, and if we’re not funding them adequately, of course there’s going to be a problem at the bargaining table. So the government could have solved this by doing a couple of things. They could have sat down with the university sector and said, “Listen, how do we deal with the reality of the situation you find yourselves in, where 7% of the entire budget of the university goes to TAs and GAs, the people out on the picket line, and they represent 54% of the teaching being done in the institution?” It doesn’t make any sense.

They could have sat down with the university sector, the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, along with the Minister of Finance and maybe the Premier, and said, “Listen, we recognize there’s a problem. We can’t fix it in one day. We may not be able to fix it in one budget cycle. But we have a plan. We’re going to put some money on the table over a period of years in order to make sure that we can meet some of the demands that are being made, because we also value the work that these people do who are out on the picket line.” No. Instead, they choose to do what? They choose to play the blame game, not fund the universities, and in the end basically blame it on the people on the picket line and use back-to-work legislation. So I say the Premier is responsible for the situation we find ourselves in, and for him to argue otherwise, I find somewhat difficult.

I’ll tell you, if Howard Hampton had been the Premier—and quite frankly, Howard Hampton should be the Premier, because I don’t think we’d be in this situation. He was very clear today at question period and afterward with the media, saying one of things he would have done if he was Premier was pick up the phone and call the university president and say, “Get back to the table.” Then the university would have said, “Mr. Premier, Mr. Hampton, what do you mean?” “Get back to the table, because at the end of the day, if you don’t do what is right by way of collective bargaining, I’m going



to have something to say about it.” And he could have put some pressure on the university to negotiate. Why? We know an agreement is possible.

This is really what’s galling about all of this. The union had demands that they put on the table. They had retreated from some of those demands and they had come within a wisp of being able to get an agreement. If you look at what the outstanding issues are on the table, getting the president of the union to order his bargaining team back to work and the Premier holding the president of the university accountable to fair bargaining would get us an agreement. We wouldn’t to have sit here in this Legislature and debate. We would allow democracy to work and the workers to freely bargain a collective agreement. But the government says, “No.” The Premier says, “No. Those are universities. They’re independent. They’ve got nothing to do with me.”

He loves to stand up with his Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities and take credit for all kinds of stuff in our colleges and universities, but when it comes to having to take responsibility to make sure workers are treated fairly, he says, “Oh, no, it has nothing to do with me.” I’m sorry, it doesn’t cut it. Either you sit in the Premier’s chair and you act like a Premier and do what has to be done—and sometimes, yes, it’s difficult—or you basically decide to play the blame game that you’re playing now. I say to the Premier of Ontario, Mr. McGuinty, shame on you for having put the workers in this position. More importantly, shame on you for putting the students in this position. This strike has gone on for the length of time it has because of your inability and your lack of wanting to find a resolution to this problem, because in the end, the problem lies with how this government has dealt with universities. I don’t accept for one second that the Premier’s argument is, “We have nothing else to do but pass back-to-work legislation,” because, my friends, there’s a lot more that has to be done and a lot more that could have been done.

1640

I want to also, in regard to this debate, talk about how we would feel, as members of the Legislature, if we were applying back-to-work legislation principles to other rights that people have in our society and to what degree the media and the public would be apoplectic. This Legislature would, quite frankly, be going through the roof. Can you imagine if we were to bring legislation into this House that said we were going to take away the rights of women in some way? What would we be saying? We’d be saying, “That’s preposterous. You can’t do that.” The government across the way will say, “Well, that would never happen.” But it’s the same principle. You’re using, by way of legislation, a hammer in order to take away a person’s constitutional rights protected under the Constitution and the rights protected under the Ontario Labour Relations Act. If you were to try to do that when it came to taking rights away from gays, women, aboriginal people, francophones or whoever, we’d be jumping through the roof and the media wouldn’t buy it for two seconds. But because it’s workers, it’s okay? I really find that galling.

In the end, our Constitution is there to protect us—and why do we know that? Because there has been a Supreme Court decision. The Supreme Court decision in the case of British Columbia said a government cannot use back-to-work legislation as a tool for ending a messy negotiation—or not wanting to pay in order to get a settlement. The Constitution says you have to maintain the rights of the individual and the collectivity of the workers by way of the spirit of the Ontario Labour Relations Act or another provincial labour relations act, and if you look at the decision of the Supreme Court, they’re pretty clear about that.

There are only a few occasions where we have the ability as a Legislature, according to the Supreme Court, to order workers back to work. One is for essential services—police, fire, others. There is a rule of law that says that those are essential services and that we recognize certain services must be provided in the nature of their business, such as police or others. The only other way you can do it would be a national crisis. Well, is there a national crisis? I guess you could argue there’s a Conservative government in Ottawa—that’s a national crisis if I’ve ever seen one. And there’s a Liberal government in Ontario, so that’s a provincial crisis.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** The Senate.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** And the Senate in itself is a crisis.

My point is that there’s no national crisis.

So there are three litmus tests to be able to order workers back to work, according to the Supreme Court: if you’re deemed an essential service, and that’s not the case; if you’re in a national crisis, and that’s certainly not the case; or if there’s clear deadlock.

The government says, “Well, there’s a deadlock.” I hear Mr. Shurman saying, “Deadlock, deadlock, deadlock, deadlock.” That’s all he can say. I hear Mr. Caplan and others get up in the House on the government side and say there’s a deadlock. Some deadlock. The union has basically gone to the table and said, “Listen, here were our demands. They were this big, and now they’re this big.” The union is trying to get back to the table to negotiate a collective agreement. They have done what you do in bargaining all the time, from either the employer’s side or the workers’ side, and that is give and take. The union has, in this case, given. They said, “Okay, we hear the employer. We’re prepared to moderate our demands.” So they have taken off the major stumbling blocks to getting an agreement and they have agreed to much of what the employer wanted, save for a couple of issues which they’re really not that far apart on.

So is there a question of deadlock? I don’t think so. I think it’ll be clear that when this thing goes to court—and I want to thank the Premier and others for making the argument for the lawyers to use when they go to court, because everything we say here can be used in a court of law. It was interesting to listen to some of the comments by the Premier earlier today and others in regard to this particular case. My guess is, as my friend Paul Miller said, even a bad lawyer could win this at the Supreme Court.



I say to the government, this is really sad, because now you've got a situation where you're going to get your way. You're a majority. The Conservatives and Liberals together are 90% of the House, and they will freely and gladly trump the rights of workers and take away the right to collective bargaining, and they'll feel good about that. They're going to go and have press releases after. I'm sure they're going to go down to the bistros and have a couple of beers and say, "Look at the great work we did. If it hadn't been for the NDP we could have done it on Sunday." Well, no, we're not going to let you do it on Sunday. We're going to do what we have as a responsibility, and that is to make sure you stand up for individual rights.

This is not a question where the union and the employer are asking to be ordered back to work. That's not what's happening. It's not a deadlock, it's not an essential service, and it's certainly not a national crisis.

I believe that when this thing goes to court, the Supreme Court will be pretty clear about what this government has done and what this Legislature has done, and I'll be proud to say, as a New Democrat, that I stood up in opposition to the legislation, even though it might be unpopular with some to do what is right.

I remind people of a guy by the name of Tommy Douglas. This may not be as analogous, but I want to make a point. During the War Measures Act, Tommy Douglas and the NDP stood up in Ottawa and said it was wrong to order in the army and to suspend the rights of citizens during the October crisis back in, I guess, the early 1970s. I was a young boy growing up then—I would have been 12 or 14 years old—and I remember asking my mother, "What's this all about?" She told me what it was all about—I'm not going to explain; we all remember in this Legislature—but Tommy, along with the NDP caucus, stood and opposed that. It was very unpopular to do—

*Applause.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** —but we applaud him, because in the end, the NDP was proven as being right: You cannot suspend the right of citizens. Whether it be a War Measures Act or whether it be an issue of collective bargaining, you shouldn't be suspending the rights of workers by way of legislation. It's contrary to the spirit of the law, it's contrary to the spirit of this nation and what this nation and this province are all about, and it's just wrong.

Je veux complimenter ma collègue M<sup>me</sup> Gélinas, qui a parlé de son expérience personnelle à l'Université Laurentienne. C'est une histoire que je n'avais pas entendue avant, mais ça donne une face humaine, comme on dit, à la question. M<sup>me</sup> Gélinas a vécu la situation du côté d'une étudiante. Elle a reconnu même là—c'était frustrant, j'imagine—et elle a compris qu'à la fin de la journée, c'est important pour les travailleurs d'avoir le droit de s'associer et de négocier des conventions collectives, puis que l'on alloue que le processus passe. Oui, ce n'est pas le fun des fois. C'est vrai que pour les étudiants c'est difficile. On le reconnaît comme parti néo-

démocratique; il n'y a pas question. Mais à la fin de la journée elle a compris dans ce temps-là, en 1985, comme on comprend aujourd'hui, qu'il est nécessaire de passer à travers le processus de négociation.

Je vais vous conter une histoire. C'est une histoire qui m'est arrivée quand j'ai commencé à travailler au début des années 1970. Pour mon premier job, j'étais à Montréal. Un petit gars du nord de l'Ontario s'en va à Montréal pour pogner un job. Je fais les entrevues; ça prend une semaine, une semaine et demie. Je fais des applications puis je fais des entrevues et tout ce qu'on est supposé de faire pour avoir un job. C'était vraiment un bon job dans une manufacture à Montréal qui était impliquée dans l'aviation, quelque chose que j'ai toujours aimé.

La journée de travail était lundi matin. C'est la même histoire qui est arrivée à M<sup>me</sup> Gélinas, mais ce n'était pas une question d'université; c'est un « plant » de production dans l'aviation. J'arrive là, et ce qui arrive est que les travailleurs sont tous en grève—ma première journée de travail. Je ne savais pas ce qui se passait. Il y a un syndicat, ils sont tous là avec leurs « picket signs », et ils sont en train de marcher devant le « plant ». Le gars qui avait fait l'entrevue, qui voulait m'engager, était à l'autre bord et il me faisait signe comme, « Viens, viens ». Je me suis dit, « Je ne m'en vais nulle part; il ya un gang de gars ici ». Je ne voulais pas traverser la ligne de piquetage.

J'ai décidé, avec le syndicat—je pense que c'était le AEM à ce temps-là. J'ai poigné ma pancarte et je me suis promené avec eux autres pendant la journée. À la fin de la journée j'ai parlé au téléphone avec le gars qui était mon patron, et il m'a indiqué que je n'avais plus de job parce que je suis resté derrière la ligne de piquetage au lieu de venir au travail.

Donc, je comprends aussi comme travailleur que des fois la ligne de piquetage n'est pas le fun, mais c'est nécessaire. Ce qui est important dans ce cas-là est que ce monde a trouvé une entente collective qui était mise en place après une couple de semaines de travail, et ce monde-là a été capable de vivre une meilleure vie.

Donc on comprend, nous, les néo-démocrates, à quel point c'est important d'être capable de négocier des ententes—des conventions collectives. Après tout, c'est le mécanisme qui permet à nos sociétés d'être capables de donner mieux aux travailleurs, de donner plus aux travailleurs, et de pouvoir vivre la vie qu'on veut avec la dignité et le respect qu'on doit avoir et l'importance de pouvoir mettre en place—je suis en train de regarder mon ami à l'autre bord.

Peter, I want to thank you so much. I was really worried about that situation. I want to thank my friend Mr. Peter Kormos for helping me out in this particular debate the way that he has. But I think you need to go back, Peter. He's back at it again.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Is there a doctor in the House? Maybe an anaesthesiologist.

I thank you very much for this time in debate. Very sadly, this legislation will move forward.



**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** I look forward to voting on this bill as soon as possible to have the students back in their classrooms.

1650

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I'm glad to see that the government is enthusiastic and on top of things, as usual.

I'd like to commend the members for Hamilton Centre, Nickel Belt and Timmins-James Bay for their fine presentations today. It warms my heart to hear that they have great concerns. They have depth, they actually have done research and they have followed up with a wonderful presentation. I can't say that for the rest of the House.

In reference to some of the comments from the member for Timmins-James Bay, we share a bit of a past. We both are steelworkers. We both come from labour roots. I can safely say that in the 34 years that I spent in the Steel Company of Canada, now US Steel, my family had over 300 years' service in that plant. Trust me; as middle-class people, we probably wouldn't have achieved that status in life at all if it hadn't been for collective bargaining, if it hadn't been for the ability to stay out for months on end to fight for our rights. I personally went through two tough strikes for months on end. Sometimes I went back for less than a dollar, but you know what? We fought, because they would have taken that dollar away. We would have been working for slave wages. I wouldn't have had a car. I would have taken the bus to work and I'd be lucky if I had a lunch pail and a lunch.

What are we doing here in Ontario? Are we taking away the right of people to strike? Are we taking away the right to bargain for a better life? I'll tell you, my three children wouldn't have finished university if I hadn't had the job I had—a hard-working job, a tough job—but I put those kids through school and I'm proud of it. I'm proud of them and I'm proud of these people.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I want to commend the member for Timmins-James Bay for his presentation. I would add to it and say that it's not only our right to debate a bill that is put forward in this House, but it's absolutely our duty to do so.

Can you imagine if every bill a majority party put forward before the House was not debated and was handled the way this bill has been? I know the vast majority of the e-mails I'm receiving say that we're stalling the democratic process. We're not stalling the democratic process; we are keeping the democratic process alive in this Legislature. That's what we're doing here. I find it very, very sad that we have to justify collective bargaining. If it weren't for unions, if it weren't for collective bargaining, we wouldn't have any employment standards rights at all. We would have a Dickens world

with child labour and with women not getting jobs. I remember, from my own history, signs saying, "Help wanted male," "Help wanted female." All of those rights we experience, we get because of union work and we get because of collective bargaining. So shame on you that we have to stand here and shame on all of those who wrote e-mails challenging the right to collectively bargain. That's why we have jobs of any substance in this country.

I think it's very sad. It's a tyranny of the majority, in fact—that's what's happening here—where the majority party simply rubber-stamps some legislation and pushes it through, has nothing to say about it, nothing to say from the official opposition, and only we in the New Democratic Party are keeping the process alive in the Legislature by actually speaking to a bill—how revolutionary a thought—actually debating legislation. How radical is that? How radical is that to actually say something about legislation? So that's what we've got here. We have the government tyranny of the majority standing in the face of democratic process and standing in the face of collective bargaining. That's what CUPE has defended, the Canadian Federation of Students has defended and the NDP.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Linda Jeffrey:** I look forward to voting on Bill 145 as soon as possible.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The member for Timmins-James Bay, you have two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I just say to my honourable Liberal colleagues that your speech writers shouldn't be paid too much today because those speeches were not very long. It's just unbelievable that you've got to read that. My God. Anyway, that's just beside the fact.

I just want to say—this is the last two minutes at second reading—this is a sad moment. In fact, what we're doing here in this Legislature, quite frankly, is trying to take away the rights of workers to free and collective bargaining. The employer had an opportunity to resolve this dispute by getting to the table. The employer at any time could have gone to the table. They still can go to the table—because there's time—and resolve this because we know the union is prepared to negotiate and has put on the table a reasonable counterproposal to the employer that allows a settlement to happen quite quickly.

I say to the government: Shame. The Premier could have picked up the phone, as was suggested by our leader, Howard Hampton, and said to the president of the university, "Get back to the table." That is something that could have been easily done, and we could have been in a situation of resolving this particular dispute tonight. If this were to happen, I would guarantee you—and I'm looking for nods; they're saying yes—they would be able to get an agreement, probably by tomorrow morning, if the Premier were just to pick up the phone and force the president to call the bargaining team back to the table and



work out an agreement. But instead, the government is going to use the heavy hand of the majority. It's what they call the tyranny of the majority, where, every now and then in a democracy, the majority runs over the rights of individuals and runs over the rights of the minority. I think this is a sad day for Ontario.

I say to the government: You still have a chance. The government still has a chance to do what's right and try to get it resolved at the bargaining table by ordering the employer to get back to the table. I would be the first one to congratulate the government that they did so. I just look forward to the government finally coming to their wits and doing what's right.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate? Does any other member wish to speak?

On January 25, Mr. Fonseca moved second reading of Bill 145, An Act to resolve labour disputes between York University and Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 3903. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

We'll call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

I have received a deferral notice in proper order that, pursuant to standing order 28(h), a deferral on Bill 145 is requested. This vote will be taken tomorrow after question period.

*Second reading vote deferred.*

Orders of the day.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** We have no further business, Mr. Speaker. I move adjournment of the House.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The deputy House leader of the government has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

This House is adjourned until 10:30 of the clock, Wednesday, January 28.

*The House adjourned at 1658.*

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
<b>Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Economic Development / Ministre du Développement économique Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
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Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
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Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
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Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
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*Continued from back cover*

<b>University labour dispute</b>	
Mr. Bill Mauro.....	4758
<b>University labour dispute</b>	
Mr. Michael Prue.....	4758
<b>University labour dispute</b>	
Mrs. Liz Sandals.....	4758
<b>University labour dispute</b>	
Ms. Cheri DiNovo.....	4758
<b>University labour dispute</b>	
Mr. Vic Dhillon.....	4758
<b>University labour dispute</b>	
Mr. Paul Miller.....	4759
<b>University labour dispute</b>	
Mr. Reza Moridi.....	4759
<b>University labour dispute</b>	
Mme France Gélinas.....	4759
<b>University labour dispute</b>	
Mr. Phil McNeely.....	4759

#### **ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR**

<b>York University Labour Disputes Resolution Act, 2009, Bill 145, Mr. Fonseca / Loi de 2009 sur le règlement des conflits de travail à l'Université York, projet de loi 145, M. Fonseca</b>	
Mr. Mike Colle.....	4760
Mrs. Liz Sandals.....	4760
Mr. Paul Miller.....	4760
Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	4760
Ms. Cheri DiNovo.....	4761
Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	4761
Mr. Bill Mauro.....	4764
Mr. Peter Kormos.....	4764
Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn.....	4764
Mr. Michael Prue.....	4764
Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	4764
Mme France Gélinas.....	4765
Mr. Dave Levac.....	4767
Mr. Peter Kormos.....	4767
Mr. Reza Moridi.....	4767
Mr. Michael Prue.....	4767
Mme France Gélinas.....	4768
Mr. Gilles Bisson.....	4768
Mr. Bas Balkissoon.....	4772
Mr. Paul Miller.....	4772
Ms. Cheri DiNovo.....	4772
Mrs. Linda Jeffrey.....	4772
Mr. Gilles Bisson.....	4772
Second reading vote deferred.....	4773

# CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Tuesday 27 January 2009 / Mardi 27 janvier 2009

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Tony Ruprecht.....	4745
Mr. Michael Prue .....	4745
Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	4745

## ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

### Post-secondary education

Mr. Jim Wilson .....	4745
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	4745

### University labour dispute

Mr. Peter Shurman .....	4746
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	4746

### University labour dispute

Mr. Howard Hampton .....	4746
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	4747

### University labour dispute

Mr. Howard Hampton .....	4747
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	4747

### Automotive industry

Mr. Robert W. Runciman.....	4748
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	4748
Hon. Michael Bryant.....	4749

### Infrastructure program funding

Mr. Paul Miller.....	4749
Hon. George Smitherman.....	4749

### Poverty

Mr. Charles Sousa .....	4749
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	4750

### Elementary teachers

Mrs. Joyce Savoline .....	4750
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne .....	4750

### Home care

Mme France Gélinas .....	4751
Hon. David Caplan.....	4751

### Affordable housing

Mr. Phil McNeely .....	4751
Hon. Jim Watson.....	4751

### Highway service centres

Mr. Robert W. Runciman.....	4752
Hon. James J. Bradley.....	4752

### Northern health travel grant

Mr. Gilles Bisson .....	4753
Hon. Madeleine Meilleur .....	4753

## Research and innovation

Mr. David Zimmer .....	4753
Hon. John Wilkinson.....	4753

## Skills training

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer .....	4754
Hon. John Milloy .....	4754

## Domestic violence

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	4754
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	4754

## Health care

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn .....	4755
Hon. David Caplan.....	4755

## House sittings

Hon. Monique M. Smith .....	4755
-----------------------------	------

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Paul Miller.....	4755
----------------------	------

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

### By-election in Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock

Ms. Sylvia Jones.....	4755
-----------------------	------

### University labour dispute

Mr. Peter Shurman .....	4755
-------------------------	------

### University labour dispute

Mr. Michael Prue .....	4756
------------------------	------

### University labour dispute

Mrs. Julia Munro .....	4756
------------------------	------

### University labour dispute

Mr. Charles Sousa .....	4756
-------------------------	------

### University labour dispute

Mr. David Zimmer .....	4756
------------------------	------

## PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

### Tuition

Mr. Jim Wilson.....	4757
---------------------	------

### University labour dispute

Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....	4757
------------------------	------

### University labour dispute

Ms. Helena Jaczek.....	4757
------------------------	------

### Multiple myeloma

Mr. Paul Miller.....	4757
----------------------	------

*Continued on inside back cover*



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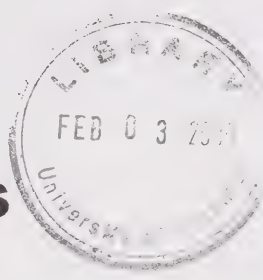
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of Ontario**  
First Session, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
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Première session, 39<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
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(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**



**Wednesday 28 January 2009**

**Mercredi 28 janvier 2009**

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Honourable Steve Peters  
  
Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters  
  
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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 28 January 2009

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 28 janvier 2009

*The House met at 1030.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I will also read a non-denominational prayer.

*Prayers.*

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I'd like to introduce Brian E. Brown, president of the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations, OCUFA.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** In the west members' gallery today, I'd like to introduce members of Yorknothostage, Catherine Divaris, Matthew Geigen-Miller, Lyndon Koopmans, Shahin Kazai, Malcolm Morum and Christina Chewchuk. Welcome.

### BIRTH OF MEMBER'S GRANDCHILD

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** On a point of order: I would be remiss if I did not point out that the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services became a "nonno" for the second time yesterday. Maggie was born yesterday morning. She is the daughter of Angie and Todd Robson and the big sister of Mia. Congratulations to everyone.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Further to that point of order, from one grandfather to another, congratulations.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** My question is for the Premier. I see him taking his desk.

Today, Premier, is the 83rd day of agony for 45,000 York University students, and some of them, as you've heard, are in the gallery today; more are outside demanding answers from this government.

Premier, can you tell these students why you have forgotten—indeed, why you have refused—to answer their letters or meet with them for the past 12 weeks? Please tell them why you think they are less important than either the union or the administration at York University, because these students have had no voice at all.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I appreciate the question and welcome the opportunity not only to speak to my colleague opposite, but to welcome the students here today. I want to assure them that our government has not

for one moment ever lost sight of our shared responsibility to ensure that we're doing everything we can to provide a quality post-secondary education to our young people. I know that the students present would also understand that we have a whole set of responsibilities, and one of those that collides with that particular one from time to time is collective bargaining. We have a responsibility to respect the collective bargaining process. In the overwhelming majority of instances, that works, and we don't end up in a predicament like this. This one failed us for reasons we don't fully understand.

Our responsibility now is to get the young people back to class. That's why we're here, that's why we've reconvened this emergency session, that's why we've introduced this bill, and that's why we're eager to get on with it as quickly as we can.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I didn't hear a fulsome answer to my question, Premier. The facts that you've presented are either incomplete or wrong.

These students are here today precisely because they have been forgotten, when they should have been the sole focus of your government. You keep saying that post-secondary education is a huge priority for you. They have had to come here today, Premier, because you have refused to meet with them and with their parents, despite repeated requests to your office. I told them that they need only speak to the residents of Caledonia to know that the Premier excels in avoiding the hot potatoes and making himself scarce during a crisis. Now that they've come to you, Premier, will you agree to meet with these students, listen to their stories and explain to them why you've allowed them to be held hostage—that's their word—for the last 12 weeks?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I know that my friend is sincere in the efforts that he's making to get these young people back to the classroom. Sometimes his words distract from that, but I think at heart he's very sincere in his efforts and I commend him for that.

Just to be clear, we have been working as hard as we can to support post-secondary education. Our five-year plan calls for \$6.2 billion by way of new investment. I think we're in the fifth year of that now. We've enhanced student assistance by \$1.5 billion. In fact, 150,000 more students are now receiving financial assistance and 120,000 students are getting grants. We brought grants back; those had been eliminated. We have 3,300 new faculty. We have 100,000 more young people in our colleges and universities today. We think that's real

progress. There's always more work to be done. One of the most important things we need to do is make sure the kids are in the classroom, though.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Sorry, folks, I think he's running for cover again.

As if these students haven't been through enough during this strike, this Premier, and more recently the NDP, have put them on a five-day emotional rollercoaster ride. Last Saturday, the Premier promised that they would be back in class this past Monday. He did this with no dialogue between his party and the other two parties, knowing full well it would never happen because the NDP would never agree to pass the bill in one day. That's what has unfolded.

Premier, we in the PC Party are prepared in these exceptional circumstances to consent to the time allocation motion to ensure that this bill gets passed and these students are back in class by Monday.

Premier, meet with the students and, please, at the very least, promise them right here and now that come hell or high water, they'll be in class on Monday.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, I want to remind my colleague and all present that the reason that we are here, in the middle of this emergency session, which started up on a Sunday, is so that we can do everything we possibly can to get the young people back in the classrooms as soon as possible.

I hope and I believe that this matter will come to a conclusion tomorrow, and I see no reason whatsoever, although I am not the final arbiter of this matter, why these young people could not be back in their classrooms on Monday.

My strong expectation, both as Premier and in my higher responsibility as a parent—and I say this to the administration at York University—is that they do everything they can to guarantee that young people will be back in the classroom on Monday morning. We'll do our part here; they need to do their part there.

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** My question is also for the Premier. Premier, the students at York University have been suffering at the hands of your government. Because of your inaction, these 45,000 students are facing an extra month of rent and living expenses, less time for summer jobs and a whole month of lost classroom time which they've already paid for. So I ask you, what are you prepared to do to assist these students?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I've spoken to this in the past, and I believe the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities has done the same. What we can do, where I think our responsibility lies, is to provide additional student assistance in the event that some students need to call upon that. I think, practically speaking, if you're down here, particularly if you've come from some other part of the province or from elsewhere and you've signed

on for an eight-month academic program and you've leased an apartment for a specific amount of time in that context, and you now discover you've got to stay on for a couple of more months, obviously you're going to incur additional financial expenses. There are going to be additional costs associated with food and transportation and the like. I understand that.

I think our responsibility is to ensure that OSAP is sufficiently flexible to meet those additional needs. I've made that commitment and we will find a way to make that happen.

1040

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Premier, that's a sad answer; that's just a promise for more student debt under OSAP and that's not good enough. Students don't deserve to have more debt and more interest charges because you chose to ignore their plight for over 12 weeks and because you allowed this strike to get to these points. These students will likely lose the month of May for summer employment, meaning the estimated loss of summer earnings for these students will be at least \$1,400 if they work full time for four weeks at minimum wage.

Premier, is more debt the best you can do for these students who were locked out of the classroom, who have been denied their education through no fault of their own? Have a heart. They've lost money and they need compensation. Will you do that?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I want to remind my colleague about some of the differences in terms of our approach here. We continue to increase the minimum wage, but my colleagues opposite have opposed that. I want to remind him as well that when the same unfortunate circumstances were visited upon the students at York in March 2001, the government of the day, in which my colleague opposite was a minister, then took the position, as we do today, because it was reasonable then and it's reasonable today, that the responsibility be found in extending OSAP funding for students affected by the strike. That's what they did then because they thought it was the right thing to do. I believe it's the right thing to do today, and that's why we're going to do it.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Premier, you know darn well that the situation was entirely different back in 2001, when York University last went on strike. The university was not shut down, students were not shut out of their classes, and many faculty crossed the picket line and taught. So they didn't lose classroom time and they weren't out of money, and they certainly didn't have to extend the school year by a month and pay extra rent and extra living expenses and all the other expenses—plus the loss of employment.

My colleague from Thornhill has just encouraged you to meet with the students, and I encourage you to do that too. John Tory has done that, I've done that as critic, as well as my colleague from Thornhill. We've not only met



with the students on many occasions throughout the 12 weeks, but we've also met with parents and our concerned constituents. So I ask you again, will you meet with the students? Will you hear first hand what they're out of pocket and what sort of compensation they may need? If the best you're going to do is OSAP student loans, will you at least make those loans interest-free?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** There are truly unfortunate circumstances which have culminated in our being here today. There's a collective bargaining process. I know some folks don't like to talk about that, but it's actually a really important process. In the overwhelming majority of instances it works, and it works well. This time it failed us and the students have paid the price. There comes a time when the government has to step in. We've done that. We're now moving as quickly as we can to get this behind us and get the students back in the classroom.

I want to remind the students, in terms of our government's approach, of our dramatic investment in post-secondary education and the positive results we've seen as a result of that. I want to remind them of the increases that we continue to make to the minimum wage. And I want to remind them that we've brought back grants as part of our OSAP program, which were eliminated under previous governments.

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** My question is to the Premier. Yesterday morning I asked the Premier to call the president of York University and ask him to go back to the bargaining table. I understand that the Premier did call the president of York University and asked him to go back to the bargaining table and engage in good-faith bargaining. Could the Premier tell the Legislature how much progress has been made as a result of his telephone call to the president of York University?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I did in fact speak with the president to make it clear to him that there was still the option open to him to sit down and continue to negotiate. I understand that the university put out a release and addressed that and said they were not prepared to do that.

I understand that my friend is very interested in pursuing the negotiating dimension of this: what one party said and what the other party said and how they responded to each other and so on and so forth. I just think we bring a different perspective here on this side of the House.

I think the general public is saying, "Look, we understand there's something called collective bargaining. But do you know what? This has gone on too long. It's failing our students. We've got to get them back in the classroom." So that's the position that we're taking. I'm just not going to get involved in the minutiae of trying to get people together and knocking heads together. It has failed us. I recognize that. What we're doing is what needs to be done. We've brought in a bill, we want to get it passed, and we want to get the students back in the classroom.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I ask the question because I think the response from the president of York University was pretty clear: It's "screw you," to students—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I'd ask the member to just temper the language a bit.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I think this raises the question, how much evidence does the Premier need that the president of York University and the administration of York University never intended to engage in meaningful collective bargaining? They have used every dodge, every manoeuvre, every strategy, to avoid a negotiated collective agreement.

My question is this: Does the Premier really believe that the McGuinty government should reward this kind of conduct by the administration of York University?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I just bring an honestly different perspective to our responsibilities here. In particular, we don't enjoy the luxury of insinuating ourselves into the collective bargaining process, sizing the parties up, finding out who's at fault in which way. That's not where we are. That's not our responsibility as I see it. Our responsibility is to come to the conclusion, as we have, that this has failed. We're not sure why it has failed—there will be time in the future for us to revisit these kinds of things—but it has failed us. It's failing the students. That's why we're here. That's why a bill has been introduced in this House. That's why we'll stay here as long as we can, but hopefully this will come to an end tomorrow, in keeping with our expectations, so that students will be back to school on Monday.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** The Premier says his government doesn't want to involve themselves in this. You're very clearly involved.

It seems to me that there's another fundamental question here. The government of Ontario represents the taxpayers of Ontario. York University is overwhelmingly a publicly funded institution, and you are supposed to represent the public of Ontario. When you call the president of York University and you suggest to him that he should get to the bargaining table and do what all good-faith employers do, and his response, Premier, is to blow you off as if it's totally insignificant, it says to me that there's an accountability problem here. It says to me that there's a real failure to understand the duty that York University has to its students, to its workers, and to the taxpayers and public of Ontario. And I say again, does the Premier really believe that that kind of conduct by a public institution should be rewarded by the McGuinty government?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, I just see our responsibility here as different than that. It's to give expression to the greater public interest. In the overwhelming majority of cases, the greater public interest demands that we respect and assert collective bargaining as being a priority. That serves us very well in the overwhelming majority of cases, but from time to time that fails us. It failed us here. Now we're doing what we need to do: We step



in, we blow a whistle, and we say, "Folks, it didn't work out." I'm not going to get into the blame game and point fingers as to where I think folks came up short. All I know is the students need to get back in their classrooms, and that's why we're acting today, and that's why we introduced this bill.

### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Again to the Premier: This has led to a debacle at York University, but there are other universities that are also trying, at this point in time, to work through some issues.

The workers at the University of Toronto have now been without a contract for over 300 days, and they have been attempting to bargain a collective agreement with the University of Toronto. We called there to see what was happening and were told that the U of T administration has been engaging in some of the same behaviour that the York University president just showed you. They've been cancelling bargaining days, not bringing real offers to the table and stalling bargaining.

If these actions at the University of Toronto lead to another employer-worker conflict, is it the intention of the McGuinty government to do the same thing once again, to simply let stalling and avoidance of bargaining happen and then legislate people back to work?

1050

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I think if there's one thing upon which we can agree, the leader of the NDP and myself and Ontarians generally, it's that these circumstances—this failure—have compromised York University's reputation. I don't think any other post-secondary institution is going to seek to emulate the result that happened at York University. There is a positive opportunity for other administrations and other bargaining units now to come together out of a sense of goodwill, keeping in mind that ultimately the reason that they're all there is to serve the interests of students and to do everything they can to ensure that we don't happen upon this kind of result again. So I remain necessarily optimistic, and I look forward to administrations and bargaining units everywhere doing everything they need to do to prevent this kind of thing from happening again.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Those are your words today, but yesterday, in a question to the Minister of Education about collective bargaining, the Minister of Education didn't respond by saying we should all encourage everyone to use their best efforts to engage in collective bargaining. Her response was that the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario should pay close attention to York University's back-to-work legislation.

So, Premier, I ask the question again, because there are really serious issues at play here. The president of York University basically just told you to blow off. They're not prepared to engage in any further collective bargaining. Is it the intention of the McGuinty govern-

ment to, in every one of these broader public sector collective bargaining situations, threaten back-to-work legislation? If that's the case, what does that do to collective bargaining and workers' rights in Ontario?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I don't know if what the leader of the NDP is asking me to do is to interfere in the processes that are unfolding by way of collective bargaining through all of our universities at present. I don't think that is what he wants me to do, but I don't really understand how he wants me to intervene, because most times he would ask me to refrain from intervening. There's a painful lesson to be learned from the York University experience. I am certain that all the university administrations and the bargaining units are paying very close attention to what has happened in these circumstances, and I am asking them, in my capacity both as Premier and as a parent, to do everything they can to come to a successful resolution of their issues and to ensure that the universities are kept open for classes at all times.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Premier, I appreciate the sincerity in what you're saying, but that's what you said to the president of York University yesterday, and he basically told you to get lost. So here is the reality, here is what happened at York: York University's senate unilaterally cancelled classes, met only four times in the fall, refused to meet during the winter, required, as they can under labour relations legislation, a vote on their offer, and after that vote was turned down said, "Oh, we're not going to bargain anymore." You call them and say, "You should get back to the bargaining table and still try to get a collective agreement," and he tells you to get lost.

Premier, you are intervening. You are sending a message by your government's conduct that broader public sector employers can stall, can dodge, can deke, can avoid, can manoeuvre, anything to avoid bargaining a collective—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you, Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** The leader of the NDP, my colleague, appears to be very familiar with the goings-on in terms of the negotiations here.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** As you should be.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I am not.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Well, you should be.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** And I'm not—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, clearly he has taken a side. He's entitled to do that. He has taken a side. We don't enjoy that luxury over here. The side that we're trying to be on at all times is fairness, the vitality of our post-secondary sector, and unlimited opportunities for our young people to become the very best that they might be. That's the side that we're on.

We will continue to pay close attention to these negotiations as they unfold here and in our other universities. We'll be encouraging all sides, at all times, to keep in



mind their highest responsibility: The reason they are there is to meet the needs of Ontario's youth. I am convinced, and I remain optimistic in this regard, that we'll do what is necessary.

### FEDERAL BUDGET

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** My question is to the Premier. It's related to yesterday's federal budget. Many of the details of that budget have been known for several days now. Given that you now know how much in federal funds will be flowing to Ontario, Premier, will you commit to bringing down your budget in mid-February, when we're scheduled to return to this House? And if not, why not?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I will refer this to the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We welcome the fact that the federal government is now joining us in investing in infrastructure; we welcome the fact that the federal government is joining us. We welcome the fact that the federal government recognizes that Ontarians expect us to work together.

We indicated yesterday that we estimate the cost associated with the infrastructure component of the federal budget, the incremental cost to Ontario, will be in the range of \$5 billion to \$5.4 billion over the next two years. There are a number of other initiatives that require a full provincial response.

We will acknowledge today that we intend to meet what they've asked us to do on infrastructure. We intend to meet the other challenges. We will bring in a budget to fully respond to that, in a timely fashion, in a way that allows the projects contemplated, that build on the \$7 billion in projects we have on the ground today in Ontario, to move forward.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** That was all very nice, but I'm sure you noticed it had nothing to do with the question.

We know that 66,000 jobs were lost in this province in this past November. We have warnings that tens of thousands more will follow shortly. There's clearly a priority here. The economy is deteriorating. All other provinces took some degree of action months ago to cushion their provinces against this situation. You've done very little. We're now going to break this House tomorrow for another three weeks.

I think what we're asking here is reasonable: Given the gravity of the situation, which you have publicly admitted, why can you not stand up today in this House and commit that you will table a budget in this place, for this province, no later than February 19?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The member opposite wants to join the party now, in terms of responding.

I'd remind him: \$9 billion over the last year in infrastructure, and he voted against every single penny of that money. I would remind him: \$3 billion in corporate

tax cuts targeted to manufacturing, targeted to forestry, targeted to get capital into the hands of our business community, and that member and his party voted against every single measure in the budget.

I would remind him that we have called on the federal government for a year and a half to build partnerships with us, and we congratulate Mr. Flaherty and the federal government for doing just that. I'd invite you to do the same thing and acknowledge that the efforts this province has taken on infrastructure, on innovation, on partnerships and on business costs started a year and a half ago. They're in the ground today.

We welcome the federal government. It's time for you to come along and work with us—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. New question.

1100

### INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM FUNDING

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** The minister professes a bit too much.

My question is to the Premier. You will know that yesterday in the federal budget, \$5.4 billion over the next two years is Ontario's share of infrastructure. You will also know that most municipalities are going to have a really tough time trying to come up with their one-third share because of the financial constraints they find themselves in. My question to you is, is your government prepared to offset some of the one-third share for those municipalities that can't afford to participate?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** I'm pleased again to have a chance to address the same question that was raised yesterday by the same party.

The word that I used in the answer yesterday was to recognize the necessity of "flexibility." Various municipal projects have already been highlighted to our government and to the federal government, where municipalities have indicated most certainly their willingness to participate on a one-third basis. Indeed, some of the infrastructure programs, like the communities component of the building Canada fund, are structured on the notion of partnership amongst three levels of government. No doubt, substantial elements of the resources will be matched by municipalities.

In conversation with Minister Baird, we've both come to the understanding that municipalities will have difficulty participating in some projects, and it will be necessary for senior levels of government to offer flexibility around this, but let's not pretend that there isn't capacity for municipalities to match some of this funding. That's further leverage and more capacity for stimulative effect, and that's something that I think we could all celebrate.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary?



**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Listen, nobody on this side of the House disagrees that the one-third share is not a bad idea. In fact, it was our government that was the first to do it in Ontario, along with the federal and municipal governments.

You know as well as I do that there are some municipalities that have a better capacity to meet that one-third share. The question becomes, what do we do with those that can't? Their municipal tax base is down because of the closure of their major industries in some cases. Others have to deal with the amount of infrastructure they're having to invest in now.

Simply put, will your government match the one-third share for municipalities that don't have the financial capacity to participate in this program, or is this money that we're again going to send back to the federal government because Ontario doesn't take it up?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** With respect, you're at serious risk of kind of missing the play here. Firstly, it's not established that every dollar is for a one-third, one-third, one-third program. A roads project, as an example, on a provincial highway is not a place where we have expectation of a matching share from municipalities. At the heart of the matter, though, are some of these programs built on the notion of one-third partnership. We recently sent \$1.1 billion to municipalities, much of that for infrastructure, much of which remains unallocated and certainly would be a very, very good point of leverage.

The member makes a suggestion that Ontario take on a municipal share well in advance of knowing what that really looks like. We want to make sure that we're operating in equal partnership with the senior level of government, the government of Canada. That will be our goal. But I assure the member we recognize that municipalities are in differing circumstances, and we will seek to be flexible on all of these circumstances as we move forward.

#### AIR-RAIL LINK

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Last Wednesday, the Premier announced that Metrolinx, the regional transportation authority, had submitted a new air-rail proposal to link Pearson airport to downtown Toronto. I have commented on this issue, which will affect the riding of York South-Weston, many times in this House. I was pleased to hear that the village of Weston will now be home to a stop for the air-rail link, which will be tunnelled together with the GO trains through Weston. The project would also include a GO station facility in Weston.

A transportation hub in Weston with a stop for the air-rail link and an expansion of GO service will mean significant change for York South-Weston. Over the course of the project, how will the ministry ensure that the residents of York South-Weston are consulted, have access to information on this major project and are able to give direct feedback on how it will affect them?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I'd like to thank the member for York South-Weston for her advocacy on this issue. The member has been involved, I think, throughout the process and she certainly has been vocal about the concerns of her constituents. The Georgetown line GO Transit improvements and the air-rail link between Union Station and Pearson airport are included as priority projects in Metrolinx's regional transportation plan.

There are currently five million trips annually between Pearson airport and Union Station—that's pretty astounding. These improvements are about the economy, the environment and the quality of life. This government recognizes the importance of hearing from the public. That is why we continue to build on previous community engagement as we move forward with another round of public consultations before beginning the transit EA. Throughout the EA, we will see a further four months of consultations with the public.

Community engagement is key to the implementation of an air-rail link and the Georgetown line improvements.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** It's important to know that the residents of York South-Weston will continue to be involved through the Metrolinx consultation process. It is important that the work that has been done thus far will form a base during the coming phase.

As announced last week, the GO expansion includes an air-rail link component that will run diesel-engine trains. The corridor has been designated by Metrolinx to be electrified in the first phase of the regional transportation plan, but a timeline has not been set, and the residents are concerned about how the present diesel engines will affect the community.

To the minister: What measures are being taken to ensure stringent emission controls? Will Toronto be the sole jurisdiction to house a diesel rail link to the airport?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** The member is correct: The Metrolinx regional transportation plan does call for the electrification of the Georgetown line, and ultimately that is our goal.

However, this cannot be done overnight; I think everybody recognizes that. Demand calls for us to deal with the needs of the Georgetown line immediately. We cannot wait to begin the necessary improvements which allow for increased service on the GO line and the implementation of an air-rail link. I want to assure the member and the constituents of York South-Weston that an air-rail link will use trains with modern, clean engines that meet the latest tier 3 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 2010 emission control standards.

In fact, diesel technology is used in a number of cities around the world to link their downtown corridors with the airports; Montreal, Miami and Manchester are examples. There will be a significant net reduction of greenhouse gases as people switch from cars to rail. In the first year of operation—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you, Minister. New question.



## DOUGLAS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** A question to the Premier: Premier, yesterday, members of the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant Local Health Integration Network voted to shut down the emergency room, operating rooms and in-patient medical beds at Douglas Memorial Hospital in Fort Erie. In short, the Liberal-appointed board rubber-stamped the plan to turn Douglas Memorial Hospital into nothing but a glorified walk-in clinic.

You have designated Fort Erie as a growth community. It's a robust, vibrant town of 30,000 people, and now Dalton McGuinty is closing down their hospital. Premier, you cannot leave the decision up to an unaccountable, unelected and largely anonymous LHIN board. Show some leadership; show some courage. Will you step in and set this decision aside and keep that hospital open?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Health.

**Hon. David Caplan:** Contrary to the bombast opposite, there's quite a different approach that members on this side of the House have taken, as we've seen previously.

Previously, under the member when he was a member of the executive council, there was the Health Services Restructuring Commission and there were a number of backroom political conversations about health care services. I want to contrast that approach with the approach that we have taken as a government, where we have local community members from the area who came together and reviewed a plan brought forward by a local hospital board and their senior management. They have come and asked an outside reviewer, Dr. Jack Kitts, to take a look at that plan. Dr. Kitts, in his opinion, has said, "In terms of improving quality of care, this plan delivers with the appropriate recommendations and changes."

This morning, I had an opportunity to meet with Mayor Doug Martin and former mayors as well in Fort Erie, and I would be happy to share the results—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the Premier: You're damned right there's a difference. We kept that hospital open. We put new money in there to make sure that ER stayed open. The McGuinty government is closing that hospital down.

It's almost like he thinks Fort Erie is part of Pennsylvania. You've set aside a lot of industrial land for the new definition of wetlands. The Fort Erie Race Track is about to close down and you're ignoring the issue, and now you're closing down their hospital for all intents and purposes.

Premier, if you've made that calculation and if you have decided that the people of Fort Erie don't matter, it doesn't matter what happens in the next election, at least have the guts to stand in your place and say that. But if you have any courage, if you have any guts, if you have any leadership, stand up right now and say this decision will not stand, that you'll set aside this decision and keep that essential hospital open for the people of Fort Erie.

1110

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** The Minister of Health.

**Hon. David Caplan:** In fact, the record of this member and his government: They closed 7,000 hospital beds right across the province; they fired 6,000 nurses and called them hula-hoop workers. It's worse than that because in the last election campaign, not one year ago, this member and his colleagues vowed to cut \$3 billion from health care in the province of Ontario. That's a marked contrast from the record of this government and the actions we have taken.

I would quote for the member the recent editorial of the Niagara Falls Review, and they say, "For far too long, health care decisions have been made behind closed doors"—by this member and his colleagues—"followed by directives issued from on high," from offices at Queen's Park. "Gledhill and her board have demonstrated they are not only capable of making tough decisions, but doing the much more difficult task of standing up publicly and taking responsibility for their actions." This is the kind of leadership that the people of Niagara and the area have been calling on for years. These—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you, Minister. New question.

## POVERTY

**Mr. Michael Prue:** My question is to the Minister of Children and Youth Services. In its poverty plan, the government said it would reduce poverty by 25% within five years if the federal government was a willing partner and if the economy was growing. The federal budget is out and the economic forecasts are in. Will the minister finally confirm that her government will achieve a 25% reduction of poverty in five years, or is the McGuinty government going to continue to blame the federal government and the economy for its inaction?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I would like to thank the member opposite. We are committed to reducing the number of kids living in poverty by 25% over the next five years. It is an ambitious target; it is a target that requires all of us to work together. In our strategy, we laid out exactly what steps need to be taken to achieve that target.

One of the components, one of the asks of the federal government, was to increase the WITB, the working income tax benefit. I was very happy to see in the budget yesterday that that is an initiative that the federal government is moving toward. We are committed to reducing the number of kids living in poverty by 90,000 over the next five years. We know what we have to do to achieve it and I'm committed to doing that.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Response? Excuse me. Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Ontarians have waited more than five years for action on poverty from this government. That's too long for the hundreds of thousands of Ontarians who can't make enough money to put food on their family table. The government finally has a plan, but it



refuses to set a solid target for poverty reduction. The question: What use is a poverty plan that has no objective and no target?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm going to offer again to take some time to spend with the member opposite to explain to him exactly how this strategy will be implemented.

I take great exception to the comment that nothing has changed. Let me give you a little example: A single mom with two kids, aged five and seven, when we were elected in 2003, had an income of under \$20,000. Once this plan is implemented, with no new federal investments, her income, working full-time at a minimum-wage job, will have gone up to over \$30,000. That is well above the poverty line. Currently, we are about halfway there because of the investments we have already made, but it's still not enough; there's more to do. We are committed to doing it. On our own, we'll get there; with the federal government, we'll get there faster.

### ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** My question is for the Attorney General. For a number of years now, this government has been charting a new course for a constructive, co-operative relationship with the aboriginal people of Ontario, a relationship that is strengthened by mutual respect. That approach has meant working with aboriginal people to collaborate on key initiatives and achieve real progress on shared goals.

In the context of the justice system, aboriginal leaders have expressed concerns regarding the specialized justice needs of their communities, particularly in the areas of prevention, intervention, reintegration and relapse prevention. They have also made it clear that of paramount importance will be the continued efforts to find aboriginal solutions to aboriginal concerns.

We have heard that this government is pursuing effective ways to reflect the diverse needs of rural and urban aboriginal communities with an emphasis on prevention for children and youth and promoting community safety. Could the Attorney General tell this House how our government is specializing, and specifically—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you for the question, Attorney General?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** I'd like to thank the member for her question and, along with many other members of the House, her advocacy on ensuring that we have a justice system in particular that works for all Ontarians regardless of who they are, where they're situated or what their background is. It's extremely important in ensuring that aboriginal persons—Metis, First Nations, Inuit—have a justice system that meets their particular and special needs.

Unfortunately, and for a number of different reasons, our aboriginal persons are overrepresented in justice and in our jails. It has been clear to all for some period of time that we need a new approach. I know the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs has been travelling the province and

working very hard, as did his predecessor, and I have been travelling to communities in all parts of this province, to develop programs that will meet the needs of those in justice, those who are victims of justice and those who want to be part of it.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** We know that the Ontario government recognizes the distinct culture of First Nations, Metis and Inuit communities in Ontario. That recognition is no doubt of great importance when it comes to the justice system. Ontarians will want to know that this government is helping to ensure that aboriginal people are treated with respect and dignity and in a culturally appropriate manner in their dealings with our justice system.

This government has been speaking about the importance of aboriginal community justice programs and how those contribute to a comprehensive justice system that works locally to address justice-related issues and challenges. I also know that the Attorney General was in Kitchener–Waterloo earlier this week supporting the expansion of a court program that will increase access to justice for aboriginal communities in that region.

Could the Attorney General tell this House how that investment will achieve those important goals?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** The member is quite right. I was in the Kitchener–Waterloo region just a couple of days ago with the member for Kitchener–Conestoga. We announced the expansion of a special court support program for aboriginal persons who become subjects of the justice system. There are court workers who provide what are called Gladue services. We want to make sure the court has all the background information necessary to make the appropriate decision when an aboriginal person is before the justice system. We announced a funding initiative there jointly, province and federal government, that will ensure that these services can be provided by a worker who resides in the region, not simply from Toronto.

We've also announced the expansion of what are called community justice initiatives, as well as the special court sentencing initiatives, in various parts of the province, including Manitoulin Island, Ottawa, Simcoe county, Sagamok, Kenora and Thunder Bay. It's all part of our determination to ensure the justice system works for the people it serves.

### DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** My question is for the Minister of Health. Last year your government announced with great fanfare that you would be covering the cost of PSA testing. That announcement understandably generated a great deal of congratulatory reaction that you and your colleagues happily soaked up. But eventually the truth had to come out, and now we discover that the announcement was really a sham. The only change is that private labs can now do doctor-ordered testing and be covered by OHIP.



1120

Minister, why did you and your colleagues lead the public down the garden path on this announcement? Why didn't you tell them the truth about this very limited change at the outset?

**Hon. David Caplan:** When a patient needs a blood test or an X-ray or any kind of medical procedure, they see their doctor. If the doctor feels that test should be performed, essentially they check a box on a lab form, and if the doctor does so, it is paid for by OHIP. Previously in the province of Ontario, this was not the case for the PSA test. Currently, it is the case as of January 1 of this year, in keeping with the commitment that we made to Ontarians back in the fall of 2007.

The characterization by my friend opposite is completely false. In fact, we have lived up to the promise which we made to Ontarians that the cost of the PSA test would be covered, and it will be under the guidance and the advice of a medical practitioner.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** If the minister has been monitoring public reaction since the discovery of the truth behind the announcement, he has to acknowledge that many, many people were misled. He and his colleagues had to know—had to know—there was widespread misunderstanding of the scope of their commitment, but they keep silent. They were around the province patting themselves on the back. I quote a letter to the editor that appeared in last week's issue of the *Ottawa Citizen*. An individual asks, "Have we been duped? Have the media been duped? Has the Canadian Prostate Cancer Network and all the other organizations who cheered at the announcement of this promise been duped?"

Minister, was this just yet another broken Liberal promise?

**Hon. David Caplan:** It's promise made, promise kept. In fact, what was committed to was that the PSA test would be covered and as of January 1 of this year.

Now, I note for the member that you could not go and get any other kind of blood test or X-ray or any other kind of diagnostic simply by showing up and presenting yourself. It would be on the advice of a physician. Why the member would suggest that PSA testing would be any different is not in keeping with the standard and accepted norms of medical care that Ontarians would expect. In fact, we have made sure that the tests will continue to be available in hospital for men who meet the guidelines. They are expanding now to community labs. In fact, this is something that I know has been well-greeted because it will help and assist men to have better health outcomes—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you, Minister. New question.

#### CHILD CARE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The question is to the Minister of Children and Youth Services. We are disappointed, but not surprised, that the federal budget contains no

child care funding. New Democrats, in fact, warned the McGuinty government that it should not rely on federal money to prop up provincial child care programs, but make good on its own pledge of three hundred million new dollars for creating more child care in this province.

With more families than ever waiting for affordable licensed child care—13,000 in Toronto alone—why did the McGuinty government put all its child care eggs in the federal basket instead of ensuring adequate provincial investments in the first place?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The child care system in this province is at a historic crossroads, frankly. We have appointed Dr. Charles Pascal to advise us on the best way to make sure our kids get the very best start in their education possible. We are committed to implementing full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds. It will have an enormous impact on our child care sector. We are confident that Dr. Pascal has consulted widely and broadly, and we very much look forward to the recommendations he's going to be bringing in.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The minister is right: It's historic, all right. A whole 12% of the children in Ontario who should be in child care can access licensed child care in this province. If that's a crossroads, congratulations to you.

The McGuinty government is doing a great disservice to families by breaking its promise to invest in child care in this province. Had the promised provincial investment of \$300 million occurred, the waiting list for child care would be shrinking at this point in time, Minister, not growing as it currently is.

How is it that the province of Quebec has an excellent provincially funded program, and Ontario lags so far behind that child care wasn't even a line item in the last budget?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'd like to correct the error in the member's question. In fact, we committed another \$25 million last year and another \$50 million this year. That money is going, in large part, to subsidies so that more kids can access child care so their parents can go back to work.

The member opposite should embrace this turning point in early childhood education in this province, because what we are doing is moving forward aggressively. In the province of Quebec, when they brought in the child care system they have now, which I must say is funded by Ontarians as much as anyone else, one of the first things that they did was bring in full-day learning for five-year-olds. We are bringing in full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds. We welcome the report from Dr. Pascal and we'll move to implement that as quickly as we can.

#### AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Much has been said about the challenges we are facing in our economy here in Ontario. One great way to help the economy in rural Ontario is for all Ontarians to choose Ontario when they make their trip to the grocery store.

Local food producers in my riding are working together with community organizations to get more fresh local Ontario foods into Ontario kitchens. We all know that Ontario farmers produce the safest and best-quality food in the world. Buying local is a great way to help local farmers promote the local economy and at the same time protect the environment, because when food travels smaller distances, fewer greenhouse gases are generated. We know that our strategy to promote Ontario food is helping to drive local sales.

Minister, could you please tell this House what our government is doing to promote Ontario foods and encourage Ontarians to buy locally?

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Order, please.

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** Members of the House are—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** They don't want me to sing. What I will say, though, is that our government has been very focused on promoting the fine quality food that we have here in Ontario. We have listened very carefully to our farmers, so we have made investments in our Buy Ontario and Pick Ontario Freshness strategies.

I would just like to read for the member a letter that I have received from Kate, who said she wanted to commend this ministry and government for our Pick Ontario Freshness campaign: "The Pick Ontario Freshness marketing strategy does a tremendous job of communicating all that Ontario agriculture has to offer."

Also, I have a letter from Tamara, who says, "I fully support this initiative and think it is long overdue. I think it is essential that consumers buy locally."

We believe that this strategy has been successful. We are getting positive feedback. We continue to be committed to doing all that we can to promote Ontario—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you, Minister. Supplementary?

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I know this minister has worked very hard to make the importance of buying local top of mind for Ontario consumers.

In my riding, I was pleased to announce four local projects under the Ontario market investment fund:

—\$86,000 to the Canadian Mushroom Growers' Association for consumer research and education and promotion of fresh Ontario mushrooms;

—\$73,000 for an Ontario's finest meat products consumer and retail campaign to generate support for Ontario's processed meat industry;

—\$100,000 for FarmzOnWheelz. I love this project, because it will engage young people in exploring farming and food. FarmzOnWheelz will be a travelling exhibit

moving across Ontario, educating the public about modern agri-food technology and its economic impact;

—\$56,000 to Guelph Community Health in the Wellington—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. Response?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** I'm happy to have the opportunity to speak about the Ontario market investment fund. What farmers and local producers have said is that they did need some support to market their products locally. So, under this program, we are offering to partner with agri-food industry groups and local food networks to help either jump-start or maintain a momentum that's within the community to promote local food products. We are providing \$12 million over the next four years to projects like the one that my colleague the honourable member has identified. My ministry is very eager to accept applications to this fund; it has tremendous spin-off in our rural communities. Farmers, producers and customers are raving about the results of these types of initiatives. It all helps to build rural communities in Ontario and support Ontario farmers.

#### HIGHWAY 407

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** My question is for my friend the Minister of Transportation. Will the minister please confirm to this House this morning that the timing of his announcement yesterday on the 407 east extension was motivated by the pending by-election in Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Here's the logic of that—my good friend would say "logic." Why would you announce tolls in the middle of a by-election if you're trying to do something for the candidate?

As with all your members, I really liked Laurie Scott. She did an excellent job as a member, and I can't for the life of me understand why the leader of the Conservative Party sharpened his elbows and moved Laurie Scott out of the way in a riding like that. We want more women in the House. Laurie was a nice person; I found her very good to deal with. She was from the riding. She's a good person and here she gets shoved out of the way by John Tory. I just do not understand why that would happen, and perhaps in his supplementary, when it comes, the member can explain that to me.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary?

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Okay. Supplementary.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I didn't hear an answer to my specific question. I know that the voters of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock will see through this political game, the timing of which has been unquestionably and solely determined by the spin doctors in the Premier's office because they're nervous about the pending by-election. For over three years, our leader, John Tory, has been calling for an expedited process for getting the 407



east extension done. But now we're hearing the province doesn't even own the land on which the highway is to be constructed. Is this why the minister is unwilling to commit to a firm completion date for the extension of the 407?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I know that this party, the Conservative Party, is very concerned about the environment. Over the years, your record of being concerned about the environment is one to behold, so I know that you wouldn't want me to pre-empt the environmental assessment process that the Minister of the Environment runs.

I cannot determine how the environmental assessment will turn out, but I do know that the former member for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, Laurie Scott, was doing a wonderful job and I just cannot understand why, in the midst of all these issues coming forward, your leader, John Tory, and his staff would sharpen their elbows and take our friend, your friend, everybody's friend Laurie Scott out of her seat. Perhaps the people of that riding will end up electing a local person when they go to the ballot box someday.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The time for oral questions has been used.

## DEFERRED VOTES

### YORK UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTES RESOLUTION ACT, 2009

#### LOI DE 2009 SUR LE RÈGLEMENT DES CONFLITS DE TRAVAIL À L'UNIVERSITÉ YORK

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 145, An Act to resolve labour disputes between York University and Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 3903 / Projet de loi 145, Loi visant à régler les conflits de travail entre l'Université York et la section locale 3903 du Syndicat canadien de la fonction publique.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1134 to 1139.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Mr. Fonseca has moved second reading of Bill 145, An Act to resolve labour disputes between York University and Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 3903. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia  
Albanese, Laura  
Arnott, Ted  
Balkissoon, Bas  
Bartolucci, Rick  
Bentley, Christopher  
Bradley, James J.

Gerretsen, John  
Hardeman, Ernie  
Hoy, Pat  
Hudak, Tim  
Jaczek, Helena  
Jeffrey, Linda  
Jones, Sylvia

Phillips, Gerry  
Pupatello, Sandra  
Qaadri, Shafiq  
Ramal, Khalil  
Rinaldi, Lou  
Runciman, Robert W.  
Ruprecht, Tony

Brownell, Jim  
Bryant, Michael  
Cansfield, Donna H.  
Caplan, David  
Carroll, Aileen  
Chan, Michael  
Colle, Mike  
Craiton, Kim  
Dickson, Joe  
Dombrowsky, Leona  
Duguid, Brad  
Duncan, Dwight  
Fonseca, Peter

Kwinter, Monte  
Levac, Dave  
MacLeod, Lisa  
Mangat, Amrit  
Matthews, Deborah  
McGuinty, Dalton  
McMeekin, Ted  
McNeely, Phil  
Meilleur, Madeleine  
Milloy, John  
Mitchell, Carol  
Moridi, Reza  
Pendergast, Leeanna

Sandals, Liz  
Shurman, Peter  
Smith, Monique  
Smitherman, George  
Sousa, Charles  
Takhar, Harinder S.  
Van Bommel, Maria  
Watson, Jim  
Wilkinson, John  
Wynne, Kathleen O.  
Zimmer, David

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Bisson, Gilles  
DiNovo, Cheri  
Gélinas, France

Hampton, Howard  
Horwath, Andrea  
Kormos, Peter

Miller, Paul  
Prue, Michael  
Tabuns, Peter

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 58; the nays are 9.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I declare the motion carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Shall the bill be ordered for a third reading?

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** I would ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** So ordered.

This House is recessed until 3 of the clock.

*The House recessed from 1142 to 1500.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I'm delighted to introduce members of CUPE 3903. We've got Vanessa, Maria, James, Julie and many, many others of striking workers. Welcome to Queen's Park yet again.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I'd like to introduce members of CUPE Local 3903: Michael Stacey, Hilary Martin, Nick Fenn and Antonia Fikkert.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I'd like to read an e-mail I received from my constituents last week with respect to the strike at York University. I will not name them, in order to protect their privacy, but I thought it was important that the House hear what they had to say.

"We are your constituents. We are also members of York's striking contract workers CUPE 3903. Two of our children, also your constituents, are students at York and are being harmed by the continuation of this strike. This

is especially true of one of them who is in his final year at York.

"While we are opposed to the principle of back-to-work legislation, we believe the harm done by continuing this strike warrants such legislation should the next two or three days fail to produce an agreement. The education of so many students is being compromised."

This e-mail was sent to my office on January 22, 2009. This is an example of how my constituents feel about the protracted strike and about the abuse that 50,000 York University students have been made to suffer over the almost 12 weeks of striking.

### CUPE RESOLUTION

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I'm rising today in disappointment of the hurtful and ignorant comments made by the head of CUPE Ontario about the state of Israel and a resolution he has advanced that has made thousands, if not millions, of Ontarians uncomfortable.

As a member of the Ontario Legislature, I condemn a proposed resolution by CUPE Ontario which would have banned Israeli professors from "doing speaking, teaching or research work at Ontario's universities." Ontario's universities are a place of higher learning, where our students are encouraged to seek the truth. Our Legislative Assembly, and by extension our government, should advance diversity and the exchange of ideas. Sid Ryan's so-called boycott of Israeli academics would limit that exchange and has the potential to damage diversity in Ontario's campuses. I also fear that his words, which have compared Israeli operations in Gaza to Nazi actions in World War II, were not only offensive but downright discriminatory.

I am pleased that he has apologized for those comments, but those words have left a lasting sting. Furthermore, with 50,000 students being forced out of one of Canada's largest universities right here in the province of Ontario, Mr. Ryan's comments cast a very sad reflection on his priorities as CUPE leader.

Finally, I call on the government of Ontario to condemn Mr. Ryan's statements, this proposed resolution, and to place a call for greater tolerance and reflection at this time.

### CORRECTIONAL FACILITY EMPLOYEES

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The people who undertake some of the most dangerous and important work in Ontario aren't getting the respect they deserve. I'm talking about the correctional service workers, represented by OPSEU, who work in jails in an environment that is never without danger and hazards.

While these 5,500 workers continue to put their work ahead of their own health and safety, the government is forcing a confrontation that could push these workers to strike. A vote on a feeble government offer tabled on

December 24 wraps up tomorrow, January 29; the old agreement expired on December 31.

Note that the McGuinty government is doing everything it can to ensure that negotiations fail. Rather than addressing the real issues confronting these workers, the government continues to ignore the brutal working conditions and daily risks to their health and safety. Stress, overcrowding and deteriorating working conditions take an extremely heavy toll on correctional service workers.

The failure of governments to take these issues seriously over the past decade has created a powder keg of problems. For one thing, it's making a lot of workers sick. I went to see first-hand what correctional service workers face on the job every day. On January 6, I visited the Hamilton-Wentworth Detention Centre, accompanied by Steve Smith, president of OPSEU Local 248, and Mike Barton, manager of security. What I saw and heard was shocking. Workers have to go home because they are covered in feces, blood and other bodily fluids from inmates. They get sick after escorting inmates with infections and illnesses to hospital. They witness suicide attempts, particularly in secure isolation. There's sick building syndrome.

These workers go through a heck of a lot. They deserve a good deal. Let's hope the government gives it to them.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Members' statements? The member for Thornhill.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** More e-mail, Mr. Speaker—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Excuse me one second. You can't make two statements; I'm sorry. My mistake.

### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Kim Craiton:** I rise today in the House to give voice to all the students and their families who have called me, visited me or written to my office about the three-month-old strike at York University. After more than 80 days of honest and sustained bargaining, the labour impasse at York has students and parents, who come in to see me on a regular basis, worried that the school year, and with it their future employment opportunities, may be in jeopardy.

Many York students count on summer employment in my community to cover their university expenses. They are worried that if this strike continues, their summer employment opportunities will be limited or potentially unavailable.

I've also heard from numerous students about how hard they've worked and the numerous hours they have spent filling out their graduate school applications. Now that hangs in the balance, due to the current work stoppage.

We in the McGuinty government have the utmost respect for the fundamental right of collective bargaining, a right that countless generations have fought to achieve. The rights of workers and the bargaining process have been respected throughout this dispute. But after three



months and countless hours of instruction lost, it's time for all parties in this Legislature to support this legislation so that we can get York's 50,000 students back to class. Their futures are at stake, and it is time that we intervened.

### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I too want to read an e-mail from a constituent, who writes:

"I am the parent of a York student and was at the rally today. I appreciate the part you have played in getting students (hopefully) back to classes. After listening to the stories of various students who have lost jobs and opportunities, I am hoping that there will be some kind of compensation offered for the loss parents and students have incurred. I have the feeling that once kids are back in school, it will be 'business as usual,' and all will be forgotten.

"In our case, my daughter is considering dropping out of second semester in order to work. She has been living in a townhouse on campus, paying rent, and will now have to extend her lease, should the year be extended into June. Her part-time job barely covers cost-of-living expenses, and having her year extended really limits opportunities for making enough money to cover costs for the next year. The university and government must consider ways of helping people like her. I would suggest a break on tuition, or a meaningful rebate.

"Please continue to urge the government and the university to remember the damage this strike has caused.

"Thank you."

To all the members on all sides of the House, this is precisely what we've been discussing all week and why it matters so much.

### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I rise in the House today on behalf of the thousands of students who attend York University. I hear from these students and their families on a daily basis, each one of them calling and asking for an end to the labour disruption so they can resume classes, prepare for summer employment and complete applications for graduate programs and other academic opportunities.

York University is Canada's third-largest university, with 50,000 students. Each one of them has been negatively affected by the ongoing labour dispute. They are worried about their academic year: that it may be lost, that an extended summer session may result in fewer job opportunities and that the labour stoppage could result in the missing of deadlines for other academic programs.

The students are not alone in the suffering, as I've also heard from numerous parents, moms and dads who've made tremendous sacrifices to help keep their children in school by contributing to expenses and offering other financial help. These parents have also expressed their desire to see the strike ended as soon as possible.

The McGuinty government has made a concerted effort to respect the hard-won rights of workers by giving collective bargaining its due process, but the two sides have reached an obvious impasse. It is time that all three parties support this legislation and put the students first. Their academic futures are at stake and we must act now to end this dispute.

1510

### PETITIONS

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas enacting back-to-work legislation for CUPE 3903 sets a devastating precedent for the hard-won right to collectively bargain across this and other sectors; and

"Whereas workers have a right to collectively bargain and the employer has the duty to come to the table and negotiate in good faith;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to vote against back-to-work legislation and send a strong signal of this Legislature's commitment to the collective bargaining process and to reject back-to-work legislation as a bargaining strategy employed by the administration at York University."

I couldn't agree more and I will affix my signature to it and give it to Nick.

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Mike Colle:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas negotiations to end the strike between York University and CUPE 3903 have reached a deadlock; and

"Whereas the strike has kept almost 50,000 students out of class for weeks; and

"Whereas the NDP is blocking attempts by the government to get the students back in class and learning again; and

"Whereas the NDP's actions are harming the education of York University students and are a slap in the face to parents and students; and

"Whereas students and parents are concerned the NDP's continuing opposition to resolving the strike could threaten the academic year" for these students;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario pass Bill 145 without further delay and get York University students back" where they belong, "in class."

I fully support this petition and I affix my name to it.

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We, the students of York University, strongly recommend that you drop this back-to-work legislation and order the York administration back to the bargaining table in good faith.

"We believe that this legislation is a slippery slope for all university sector employees' right to collective bargaining. We have faith that you will pressure York to come up with a good agreement, and fast, because we want to get back to class. We request that not only will you intervene, but do so in a way that reflects good governance.

"Prove yourselves as rightly fit to govern, respectful of democracy and, most of all, respectful of the collective bargaining process by calling on a new, non-partisan mediator. It is not too late.

"We support the right of workers to collectively bargain, and see that the only enemy in this process has been the York administration and its board of governors, which include many cabinet members from the Harris years.

"We request that, if the government wants a quick end to this strike, two things happen:

"(1) That they appoint a non-partisan mediator to spend the next few days working out a contract that reflects a decent living wage and job security;

"(2) That they appoint a team of accountants to overview York's budget and see how York is mismanaging our tuition dollars by not putting our dollars toward the education of the students."

I've signed this petition and send it to the table via Nick. Thank you, Nick.

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas negotiations to end the strike between York University and CUPE 3903 have reached a deadlock; and

"Whereas the strike has kept almost 50,000 students out of class for weeks; and

"Whereas the NDP is blocking attempts by the government to get the students back in class and learning again; and

"Whereas the NDP's actions are harming the education of York University students and are a slap in the face to parents and students; and

"Whereas students and parents are concerned the NDP's continuing opposition to resolving the strike could threaten the academic year for York University students;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario pass Bill 145 without further delay and get York University students back in class."

I agree with this petition and I affix my signature to it.

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I have a number of petitions addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas enacting back-to-work legislation for CUPE 3903 sets a devastating precedent for the hard-won right to collectively bargain across this and other sectors; and

"Whereas workers have a right to collectively bargain and the employer has the duty to come to the table and negotiate in good faith;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to vote against back-to-work legislation and send a strong signal of this Legislature's commitment to the collective bargaining process and to reject back-to-work legislation as a bargaining strategy employed by the administration at York University."

I've signed that petition.

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas negotiations to end the strike between York University and CUPE 3903 have reached a deadlock; and

"Whereas the strike has kept almost 50,000 students out of class for weeks; and

"Whereas the NDP is blocking attempts by the government to get the students back in class and learning again; and

"Whereas the NDP's actions are harming the education of York University students and are a slap in the face to parents and students; and

"Whereas students and parents are concerned the NDP's continuing opposition to resolving the strike could threaten the academic year for York University students;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario pass Bill 145 without further delay and get York University students back in class."

Mr. Speaker, I fully support the petition. I affix my signature to it and will send it to you.

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas enacting back-to-work legislation for CUPE 3903 sets a devastating precedent for the hard-won right to collectively bargain across this and other sectors; and

"Whereas workers have a right to collectively bargain and the employer has the duty to come to the table and negotiate in good faith;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to vote against back-to-work legislation and send a strong signal of this Legislature's commitment to the collective bargaining process and to reject back-to-work legislation as a bargaining strategy employed by the administration at York University."



I add my name to the hundreds of signatures on this petition and I give it to Nick, again.

UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. David Zimmer:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas negotiations to end the strike between York University and CUPE 3903 have reached a deadlock; and

“Whereas the strike has kept almost 50,000 students out of class for weeks; and

“Whereas the NDP is blocking attempts by the government to get the students back in class and learning again; and

“Whereas the NDP’s actions are harming the education of York University students and are a slap in the face to parents and students; and

“Whereas students and parents are concerned the NDP’s continuing opposition to resolving the strike could threaten the academic year for York University students;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario pass Bill 145 without further delay and get York University students back in class.”

UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** “Whereas enacting back-to-work legislation for CUPE 3903 sets a devastating precedent for the hard-won right to collectively bargain across this and other sectors; and

“Whereas workers have a right to collectively bargain and the employer has the duty to come to the table and negotiate in good faith;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to vote against back-to-work legislation and send a strong signal of this Legislature’s commitment to the collective bargaining process and to reject back-to-work legislation as a bargaining strategy employed by the administration at York University.”

I agree with this petition. I have signed it and send it with Nick to the table.

1520

UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** I too have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas negotiations to end the strike between York University and CUPE 3903 have reached a deadlock; and

“Whereas the strike has kept almost 50,000 students out of class for weeks; and

“Whereas the NDP is blocking attempts by the government to get the students back in class and learning again; and

“Whereas the NDP’s actions are harming the education of York University students and are a slap in the face to parents and students; and

“Whereas students and parents are concerned the NDP’s continuing opposition to resolving the strike could threaten the academic year for York University students;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario pass Bill 145 without further delay and get York University students back in class.”

I agree with this petition, affix my signature thereto and give it to Wayne.

UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas enacting back-to-work legislation for CUPE 3903 sets a devastating precedent for the hard-won right to collectively bargain across this and other sectors; and

“Whereas workers have a right to collectively bargain and the employer has the duty to come to the table and negotiate in good faith;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to vote against back-to-work legislation and send a strong signal of this Legislature’s commitment to the collective bargaining process and to reject back-to-work legislation as a bargaining strategy employed by the administration at York University.”

I affix my signature to this petition.

UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas enacting back-to-work legislation for CUPE 3903 sets a devastating precedent for the hard-won right to collectively bargain across this and other sectors; and

“Whereas workers have a right to collectively bargain and the employer has the duty to come to the table and negotiate in good faith;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to vote against back-to-work legislation and send a strong signal of this Legislature’s commitment to the collective bargaining process and to reject back-to-work legislation as a bargaining strategy employed by the administration at York University.”

I have signed this petition, I agree with it and send it to the table via Nick.

UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I have another group of petitions here addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas enacting back-to-work legislation for CUPE 3903 sets a devastating precedent for the hard-won right to collectively bargain across this and other sectors; and

“Whereas workers have a right to collectively bargain and the employer has the duty to come to the table and negotiate in good faith;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to vote against back-to-work legislation and send a strong signal of this Legislature's commitment to the collective bargaining process and to reject back-to-work legislation as a bargaining strategy employed by the administration at York University."

I have affixed my signature to that petition and give it to our team leader, Jordan, to bring it over.

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas enacting back-to-work legislation for CUPE 3903 sets a devastating precedent for the hard-won right to collectively bargain across this and other sectors; and

"Whereas workers have a right to collectively bargain and the employer has the duty to come to the table and negotiate in good faith;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to vote against back-to-work legislation and send a strong signal of this Legislature's commitment to the collective bargaining process and to reject back-to-work legislation as a bargaining strategy employed by the administration at York University."

I agree with this petition. With the help of my friend Gilles Bisson and his pen, I will affix my signature and send it to the table via Nick.

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas enacting back-to-work legislation for CUPE 3903 sets a devastating precedent for the hard-won right to collectively bargain across this and other sectors; and

"Whereas workers have a right to collectively bargain and the employer has the duty to come to the table and negotiate in good faith;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to vote against back-to-work legislation and send a strong signal of this Legislature's commitment to the collective bargaining process and to reject back-to-work legislation as a bargaining strategy employed by the administration at York University."

I will affix my signature to this petition.

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I have a petition that reads as follows:

"Whereas enacting back-to-work legislation for CUPE 3903 sets a devastating precedent for the hard-won right to collectively bargain across this and other sectors; and

"Whereas workers have a right to collectively bargain and the employer has the duty to come to the table and negotiate in good faith;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to vote against back-to-work legislation

and send a strong signal of this Legislature's commitment to the collective bargaining process and to reject back-to-work legislation as a bargaining strategy employed by the administration at York University."

I'm in agreement and affix my signature thereto.

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas enacting back-to-work legislation for CUPE 3903 sets a devastating precedent for the hard-won right to collectively bargain across this and other sectors; and

"Whereas workers have a right to collectively bargain and the employer has the duty to come to the table and negotiate in good faith;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to vote against back-to-work legislation and send a strong signal of this Legislature's commitment to the collective bargaining process and to reject back-to-work legislation as a bargaining strategy employed by the administration at York University."

I sign this petition.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The time for petitions has expired.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### TIME ALLOCATION

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 145, An Act to resolve labour disputes between York University and Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 3903, that the order referring Bill 145 to the Standing Committee on Social Policy be discharged, and the bill be ordered for third reading; and

That, when the order for third reading is called, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That there shall be no deferral of any vote allowed pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to 10 minutes.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Ms. Smith has moved government notice of motion 111. Further debate?

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I think we all agree that the collective bargaining process is important, but in this case it was not successful. In this situation, failure to reach an agreement has a real impact. This is not a strike at an ordinary business where consumers can find the goods and services they need from other suppliers. Here, these students have no other choices in terms of post-



secondary schooling for this year. Many, perhaps most of them, have already paid their tuition in advance and in full. As a government, we cannot stand by when, even after extensive attempts at negotiations and mediation and a strike that has continued for 12 weeks, there remains a clear deadlock between the parties, endangering the academic year for these 45,000 students. Under the legislation before the House, all outstanding issues that cannot be resolved would be referred to binding arbitration. However, nothing prevents the parties from continuing to negotiate.

This legislation, if passed, allows for York University and CUPE 3903 to intensify their efforts to resolve their differences and arrive at a mutually acceptable agreement, even as the arbitration proceeds. In the meantime, York students will be in class receiving the excellent post-secondary instruction that York offers and that our students need to meet the challenges of the 21st century. The greater public interest demands that, as legislators, we act. This should be put to a final vote so the students can get back to learning.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I've spent the entire week here, along with the rest of you, not having expected or wanted to do that, and not having wanted to come back until February 17 to discuss broader business in Ontario. I also want to go on record, as far as my party is concerned, with the fact that a time allocation motion limiting debate is not necessarily something we would ordinarily accept, because we believe in stimulating debate as much as possible.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I've already heard enough, thank you.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** You're agreeing with me? In that case, that's great. We wouldn't want to cut off debate. However, in this particular instance, as I have stressed time and time again, the important and the paramount issue here is getting students back into their classrooms as soon as possible. With luck and God's good grace and perhaps the help of some of the people in the gallery, we can do that on Monday morning. So in this instance, I have to say that debate has gone on far enough. We're prepared to agree and vote for this motion, and we hope to proceed with haste.

1530  
**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I will be joined this afternoon in the course of this debate by my colleagues the member for Timmins—James Bay, Gilles Bisson, and the member for Parkdale—High Park, Cheri DiNovo.

In the brief period of time that's allowed to us—this is a time allocation motion. It means that the government is not going to let this bill be submitted to the process of this Parliament. What's remarkable is that the government has introduced this time allocation motion after less

than six and a half hours of debate, when there have been but 10, 11, 12 speakers, most of them 20-minute slots.

I understand time allocation. I don't agree with it; I don't support it; I've never voted for it.

**Interjection:** Never?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I understand time allocation—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Order.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** —but I've never voted for it. I won't vote for it today. I understand time allocation when a matter is being debated with the purpose, let's say, of a filibuster, although I'm a fan of filibusters as a tactic in a Parliament. They can be a meaningful and useful tool in the democratic process. I understand them; I don't like them.

I was here at time when there weren't restrictions on lengths of speeches. The member for York Centre recalls that as well. He recalls that on issues of significant public interest and importance, we'd spend weeks and months debating a particular bill on second reading alone. On other matters, things could be resolved with first, second and third reading in a day and a half, because what we knew was that when you impose these rigid controls on the amount of debate that an individual member could engage in, you then often create a scenario where the minimum becomes the maximum and the maximum becomes the minimum.

This is very serious legislation. Look, nobody in this chamber has ever applauded an 11-week work stoppage. Nobody has failed to acknowledge and understand that when there's a labour dispute that results in a strike or a lockout—and, as said before, this strike looks far more like a lockout than a strike—no one attempts to say that people aren't hurt. The workers are hurt; they aren't earning money. Collective bargaining, dispute resolution, is hurt because people aren't negotiating to resolve a conflict. In the private sector, the consumers—in this instance, a university, the students and their families—are hurt. And the university is hurt. As I say, the longest-lasting blemish here will be the one that will be worn by York University, which has now acquired a well-deserved reputation for bad labour relations and for collaborating with the government to force workers back to work without negotiating a settlement but rather submitting them to an imposed settlement.

Look, they're right. This isn't a factory. People aren't building widgets, things. People are educating students, people are doing academic research, people are building the reputation of a place of learning, so the need to avoid acrimony is far greater here than it is in a nuts-and-bolts factory, where the nuts and the bolts can go through all the various quality controls and testing, and the bad ones can be discarded and the good ones will be shipped out. I guess they won't be shipped out, because there are no manufacturing places left in the province of Ontario to consume or purchase the nuts and bolts that those contractors have been making.

Look, I'm confident that the students over the course of the last 11 weeks, albeit frustrated, have worked hard.



I'm confident that they've been going through the required reading lists and reading those texts. I'm confident that maybe for the first time, because I remember what it was like as a university student, they actually got to the supplementary reading list and have begun reading those texts. I'm confident that they have ensured they're not going to go back to the classroom unprepared. I'm confident that they've been working and they know what their course curriculum and requirements are and probably have been working on essay outlines and perhaps doing some of the initial research, because I know so many of these students, so many of these young people. There may be a handful who have simply sat out the last 11 weeks. I'm confident, the vast majority of those students have worked hard doing the work that they would be doing outside of the classroom in any event.

Government has been referring to the students as "kids." I mentioned the other day that they're not kids; they're young adults and adults. They're people in post-secondary education. You don't take them by the hand to use the washroom. You don't put them in a classroom for six hours a day and guide them through the pages of a textbook. You give them reading lists, you give them course requirements, you give them outlines, you give them sources and then, as you develop this post-secondary skill and intellect, they become increasingly autodidactic.

New Democrats have made it clear that it isn't our goal to block legislation. We know it's going to pass; it's a majority government. Indeed, since the filing of time allocation motions, the timelines have been apparent. York University management knew—heck, yesterday—that this bill was going to be voted on for third reading on Thursday morning. You don't gotta be a rocket scientist, as the guy from the cooking show says, to understand that. You look at the time allocation motion and look at the procedural rules.

It has been remarkable to have government members display a haughtiness, a sense of offence, that not everybody agrees with them on a particular controversial issue. I've been here since 1988. I've watched majority governments. I watched the one in 1987 get elected. I was part of that government, joining it a year later. I watched the one in 1990 get elected; 1995, remember that well; through to 2003. I've watched majority governments get elected. I've watched people elected to this assembly as first-time members being elected directly into government—on sweeps. And do you know what? I'll say this about every one of those governments, the one that I was a member of as well: Governments elected on sweeps defeat good members of the Legislature who ought to have been re-elected and elect members of the Legislature, some of whom have no business being here. When you're elected directly into government, you acquire a sense of entitlement as majority government that leaves one incapable of understanding how this system, how this institution, is supposed to work.

When there's unanimity there will be, well, unanimity, but when there's not, there's going to be debate. There's

going to be criticism, and there's going to be an effort to provide different perspectives. When you have conflicting interests at play, minority interests have as much right to be represented and spoken to in this chamber as do perhaps the more popular and majority interests.

1540

At a deep level, I'd argue that the interests of collective bargaining are everybody's interests; I would argue that strongly. The interests of negotiation, as compared to having an imposed settlement, are in everybody's interest. But on such an emotional issue as this, with consequences for everybody, people are disinclined at the moment to look at the deep, deep, deep analysis but, rather, look at it from a very personal perspective and what it means for them at the moment.

I do want to welcome some people here: Andrea Kormosova and her brother, Jan Kormos, from Bajerovce, a small village in eastern Slovakia; and Andrea's friend Martina Jancikova, from Kosice, a bigger city, close to Bajerovce.

When I told them what we were debating today, they found it, quite frankly, remarkable. They're too young to remember the old regime but they remember what their parents and grandparents had to say about it. Their perspective of this liberal, democratic Canada—Ontario—was that there was a right to strike which, in the place where they came from, didn't exist or existed in name only for a long, long time.

The right to withdraw one's labour is a fundamental democratic right. The right to collective bargaining is a constitutional right.

I'm not going to argue legal issues here. I'm going to concede that the university's failure to engage in good-faith bargaining has been a serious problem. That's why, when I sat beside Howard Hampton this morning during question period and he queried the Premier to the effect of, "How is it that you have so little influence over the president of York University? Or did you really want to exercise that much in the first place?"—it's remarkable. You have a Premier who last Friday agreed with collective bargaining and supported it, and who, in 24 hours, didn't believe in collective bargaining anymore and was advocating back-to-work legislation.

The bill will pass tomorrow morning. It will pass without any further debate; no further debate. It was forced into committee but the government took it out of committee by virtue of this time allocation motion. I showed my cousins Jan and Andrea and their friend Martina—Helen Brown was with them; she's their cousin as well—the committee room downstairs on the first floor as we toured Queen's Park after question period. I explained to them that the committee room is where the public has access to the parliamentary process. The committee room is where anybody—be they expert, scholar, academic, lawyer, teacher or homemaker or retiree—can come and participate in discussion and debate around government legislation and the policy goals of that legislation. The response was that even to date, in the place where they come from, that is unheard of.



I find it tragic that this bill will not have even one day of public hearing. In the time allocation motion, there could have been a provision for one day of public hearing. It could have been rigidly controlled. There could have been but 10-minute slots available to people, so that at the very least those students and their families, the ones who want back-to-work legislation and the ones who, quite frankly, continue to support the workers and their struggle, along with those workers and other faculty, along with people who have a keen interest in the role of publicly funded post-secondary education in our province—there would have been some modest chance for them to participate in the process and attempt to persuade decision-makers—us. My cousins from Slovakia looked at that committee room, heard clearly what I was saying and said, “That never took place in the old days, not the way our parents told us, and it doesn’t even take place now.”

We tend to so frequently overlook the sensitivity, the fineness of what can take place here. When the government wants something rushed, well, they get it rushed, and when, for whatever reason, it wants it to sit on the back burner, this government can let an agenda, let a bill sit on the back burner for months and years. This government can not proclaim bills that it passes to get the spin of the day when it doesn’t really want that legislative initiative. There’s a reason why you have three readings to a bill. It’s so that the process is controlled enough that it’s a thoughtful process, and so that interests that are at odds with the goal of the legislation can be addressed and articulated.

I just find it incredibly sad that government members—well, I suppose the only thing they’ve demonstrated is that our petitions are bigger than theirs. We saw them fade promptly today in petition period. But it saddens me that there’s almost this snottiness about, “How dare you not agree with our legislation? How dare you take a contrary view?” This isn’t a one-party state, and let’s hope it never becomes one. This forum is a forum of debate and, from time to time, consensus. That’s why you’re called the government and this is called the opposition. It’s not necessarily a forum of unity, and there’s nothing wrong with that. That’s the very best of things. New Democrats know that there are only 10 of us. We know that we’re unlikely to persuade government members to move away from the whipped position of the Premier’s office. We’d like to hope that, from time to time, it would happen. But surely, government members have as much interest in ensuring that there’s a thorough canvassing of the issues and facets of a matter before it gets passed. Surely, government members have that same interest as do opposition members.

We’ve got Brian Brown, the president of OCUFA, here today. I tell this government—and look, Peter Shurman, before the Christmas break—for those who advocated back-to-work legislation, Peter Shurman was saying, “Call back-to-work legislation.” We disagreed. Government knew that we weren’t going to roll over on

this. How could you possibly have thought otherwise? And then to play the game, the cynical, political, partisan game of spinning New Democrats blocking the bill—my foot. Your House leader will tell you full well that there are procedural tactics that are provided to be obstructive. We could have been obstructive. We made it clear from the outset. We were insistent that the matter of this important legislation, with such a significant impact on collective bargaining rights of workers, should be subjected to due process—a modest due process.

We’ve also mentioned that, in view of how York University has mishandled this whole matter, the legislation should have been back-to-the-table legislation, forcing York U management to get back to the bargaining table, and that the Premier, Mr. McGuinty, should have been on the phone in a very, very forceful way, telling the president of York University to get his butt into that bargaining room and don’t even think of leaving it until he has hammered out a deal.

1550

Paul Miller the other day—an experienced industrial trade unionist—talked about how, quite frankly, sweaty and foul-mouthed and tiresome these 24-hour bargaining sessions can be. I don’t know if any of you have seen the documentary about Buzz Hargrove and de Havilland. It’s shown in any number of classrooms to demonstrate the behind the scenes of hard, down and dirty, tough, mean—mind you, very, very testosteroneic—bargaining. Buzz’s mother would wince. I’m sure he turns the volume down if and when she ever sees the film. But it was a wonderful example of deal-making, of being committed to resolving an issue and working at it until it was resolved. Look, I’m a fan of Buzz’s negotiating skills, but when there is an out, when there is the clear messaging about an escape clause—the back-to-work legislation—York University has no compulsion to go back to the table.

What I find remarkable is that the union recommitted to bargaining and York U management persisted in its pursuit of a third party imposed settlement. That, I say to you, all of you, does not bode well for York’s future or for the future of other post-secondary facilities—colleges and universities—in this province.

I close by noting this—and perhaps it’s the tactic. High-priced help sit in the backrooms of government offices—the spinsters and the analysts and the pollsters—and they figure out angles. They say, “How can we wedge this or wedge that?” Am I being oh, so cynical when I think that the Premier was utilizing this exercise to deflect focus away from the gross underfunding of post-secondary education in this province, somehow blaming the parties? Oh, and then wanting to be like Pontius Pilate, and—I’m really mixing the metaphors now; a pox on both their houses—washing his hands of it and saying, “Well, it doesn’t matter who’s right and who’s wrong, just stop fighting, kids.” It doesn’t matter who’s right or who’s wrong; what matters is how you achieve effective resolutions to conflict and dispute. That’s what the Premier has not shown any interest in.



What's wrong is when the Premier uses these observations on his part to move attention away from the chronic underfunding of post-secondary education in the province of Ontario—10 out of 10. Ten out of 10, not 9 out of 10, not 8 out of 10; 10 out of 10. Surely nobody in this chamber, visitors included, can have any pride in that whatsoever. Yet this back-to-work legislation and the prospect of more to come, or the threat of it for university and college workers in negotiations down the road, all but guarantees that we will be hard-pressed to move from that status of 10 out of 10 as long as Mr. McGuinty and the Liberals are at the helm.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Leeanna Pendergast):** Further debate?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Well, interesting how silent the debate from the government and opposition side of the benches is—from the government side, anyway, and the Tory side.

I've only got about eight minutes, and I know my colleague Cheri DiNovo wants to participate, but I want to make a couple of points. We talked about how the government, if they really wanted to get this negotiation settled, could have done so a long time ago. We know that the Premier, despite anything he might say in the Legislature and in the media, has a certain amount of say, because we as a province fund universities. If he had called the university and said, "Listen, we need you to get back to the table and find a settlement," York University probably would have said, "Well, Dalton, thank you for calling but put some money on the table," and then it would have been a decision on the part of the Premier to do so or not. I would suspect that's probably why he's not very eager to have that conversation with the York University president or the president of any other university.

For the government to argue that this is really pressing—"We need to do it because there's an impasse"—I think is really beyond the pale, because the union has been extremely clear that they have backed off on their demands; they have come close to a position where the employer should be able to accept what has been offered. What's happening here is the government is using the Legislature to do harm, quite frankly, to the collective bargaining process and to the workers.

I say this with experience, because I've negotiated on both sides of the table. I've negotiated as a trade unionist for the steelworkers in many collective agreements; I've also negotiated from the employer's side of the table. I understand it's all about give and take.

If an employer and a union are not able to come to an agreement and there is an imposed settlement on the part of the employer with back-to-work legislation, imagine what the atmosphere is going to be like at that university in the coming weeks, months and possibly the coming years. I think it's going to be very tough for the people who have been involved in this particular strike to go back to work and to feel as if they're valued by their employer, that their employer values the work they do.

I'm not saying there's going to be a work-to-rule—I don't know. But I do know that if I was an employee of a

company that had treated me this way, when they called on me to go above and beyond, I don't think I'd be going beyond very much, because I would understand exactly where the employer is at. The employer is saying to me as an employee, "Listen, I don't think your requests are valid. I don't think what you put on the table merits discussion." I would feel hurt by that, and I think at the end of the day that would be a disservice to the university.

We know this is just the beginning of the road. This is the first unit to come up for negotiations. There are going to be others that come up.

I want to make the following point: If the government had put as much effort into finding a settlement as they did into putting back-to-work legislation through this Legislature, we would have found a resolution a long time ago. Just the amount of money that it took to run this Legislature for the four or five days that we've been here could have been diverted to the coffers of the university in order to find a settlement—because we're not talking about a lot of money. The government says, "We're doing all that we can to get the people back to work so students can go back to school." Well, I argue that if you would have put as much effort into trying to find a solution to negotiations by sitting down and having a discussion or a phone call with the university president, I'm sure the university could have found a way back to the table and we could have got ourselves an agreement. Instead, this government tries to do what is easy. They come in here and they introduce legislation to order people back to work, and I think that's wrong.

The second thing I want to say: Imagine you're a private sector employer—I see my good friends across the way and on this side who have run businesses. I've run a small business. I see my friend across the way who has run a much larger business than I did. Imagine if you went to employers in Ontario and said, "Listen, we've got a law and it says, 'If you can't negotiate a collective agreement, you get to do back-to-work legislation on your own, as the employer.'" Which employer would ever go to the bargaining table and negotiate? Can you imagine Xstrata, can you imagine Ford, can you imagine any business in Ontario that is unionized that would have the right of this government to say, "Well, you know what? I don't need to negotiate with my employees"? Yes, they've got the right to organize; yes, they're able to sign themselves into a union by signing a card and having a certification vote; and yes, they can get to the bargaining table, but at the end of the day the employer could say, "I've got a special law that says, 'I'm ordering you back to work'"—because that's what the employer is doing in this case. The employer is the province of Ontario. The argument that the government makes is, "Oh, the university is an independent, arm's-length agency. We've got nothing to say about them." Who cuts the cheque? That's the litmus test. It's the province of Ontario; it's the taxpayers, through this government, who fund our universities. In this case, they are the employer.

What you've got is the employer who's saying, "I don't want to pay the demands on the bargaining table,



therefore I'm going to use the power that I've got by using the Legislature to order people back to work against their will."

Thank God 10 New Democrats are here, solid and strong, who have at least had an opportunity to use their democratic right to point out how wrong this is and why it shouldn't be done, and that we've exercised the responsibility to the degree that is reasonable in this particular situation.

1600

Can you imagine what would happen in Ontario if an employer like Xstrata, Tembec, Ford or any of these employers were to have this right? You would have labour strife in this province—and the Minister of Labour across the way knows as well as I do—like you've never seen before. Because the unions and the workers would be saying, "This is nuts. The employer can order me back to work. There's no sense negotiating. Let's just withhold our services or work to rule," or God knows what would happen. I would say that any fair-minded individual, be it a pro-union or an anti-union person, would say that's not right. We need to respect that in democracies there are checks and balances, and one of the systems that allows people to exercise their democratic rights as workers is the process of collective bargaining. So I say to the government across the way, shame on you for putting as much effort as you can in bringing back-to-work legislation into this House, taking away the rights of workers to free and collective bargaining, and then say, "That was what we needed to do."

It was a really telling sign a little earlier where one of the government members was repeating the words of Mike Harris. I thought, "My God." I sat through those eight years of Mike Harris here in the House, and I remember how he trampled over the rights of workers. I remember Liberals sitting in opposition with us being apoplectic about how workers in this province were being treated, specifically public sector workers. They said, "If we go to the other side of the House, we're going to be different." I see through the actions of this Liberal McGuinty government. You guys might have campaigned like New Democrats but, my friends, at the end of the day all you are is a bunch of Tories. I say to you, shame on you for trampling on the rights of workers. Shame on you for using this Legislature this way; it's a misuse of power and the trust that you asked for at the last election and the previous election. In the end you have done disservice, I believe, to democracy. I believe that the workers here involved, and not only the workers but those who are interested, will remember what you have done. When the next occasion arises, another public sector strike and a set of negotiations—and we're going to see it again in other universities—this will be remembered. This will not be a shining moment in labour history in the province of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Leeanna Pendergast):** Further debate?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It certainly is an extremely sad day in this House. To pick up on the comments of the

member from Timmins—James Bay, I remember looking at this government channel when the Liberals were in opposition to the Tories and objected to closure motions. Now, of course, they're governing just like Mike Harris Conservatives and invoking closure and shutting down debate.

It's a very sad day when the tyranny of the majority runs like a steam shovel over the rights of minorities. I have to remind the House that it's always only a small group of people, historically, that stands up for the rights of minorities against the tyranny of majorities. Our job as opposition in this House, our duty, our requirement for being opposition in this House is to stand up against the tyranny of a majority government: That's our job. So when we get e-mails that cry out that we're blocking a legislation, we say this is simply nonsense. What we are doing is not blocking legislation; we're upholding democracy. That's what we're doing. We're upholding the legislative process. We are doing what we are required to do by duty for our constituents and for the rights of minorities, in this case the right of a minority, against the majority.

I used to be, before I was elected, a United Church minister. I'm still a United Church minister. I actually came into this place with some ideals intact. I actually thought that this place was about principles and ethics. I thought that everyone here was elected for a purpose, and that the purpose was to defend the rights of minorities, the rights of the marginalized, the rights of those who could not defend themselves, who would never be elected, who would never have a voice in this place. I thought that's what we were here for. We could debate what that looked like, we could debate what those rights should be, but that's why we're here.

I discovered very quickly in the political process that what many of us are here for is simply to get re-elected, that what many of us are here for in this House is not to stand on principle or for ethical causes but simply—dependent on what the polls say—to stand, as a sort of popularity contest, for whatever the majority wants at any given time. That's not leadership, my friends. That's not your role as those in elected capacities. That is not what this Legislature was designed for. It's not a game. It is not a popularity contest.

Quite frankly, history always shows that when the press and the majority are arrayed against the rights of the minority, they may not win then, but they will win eventually. So we may be 10 now, but we will not always be 10. And CUPE may stand alone now—it must feel like that some days, out in the cold—but trust me, it's not going to always be that way. Basically, what they stand for and what we stand for in minority will one day be the historical record, will one day be history's judgment upon the tyranny of the majority. That's what we're doing here.

People have said that we're against the rights of students to go back to school and get an education. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Boy, do we live in Orwellian reality in this place; nothing could be farther



from the truth. We actually stand with the students—the students who are striking; the students who want to return to classes—against an employer, a management, at York University that doesn't want to bargain, that doesn't want to see students back in the classroom, that simply wants to keep the status quo.

We stand for degrees that mean something, that have some value, so that when you get a master's or a Ph.D., it actually means something. It means you have attained something. You should be able to get benefits, security, a job in academia that actually pays a reasonable salary. We stand for a valued degree in a valued university. Clearly, the management at York University only stands for self-interest. Clearly, our friends in this House who side with them—not on the side of the students. Come on. The Tories standing up for education? Give me a break. Do we have no history? Do we not know, even 10 years back, what went on in this province when Mike Harris was Premier and took a meat axe to education in this province? Come on. And when the Liberals act like Tories, do we not hear again the sounds of Harris echoing in this chamber? Absolutely.

We stand with the students. That's what we're doing. We've been declared to be 1970s ideologues—I love that—as if we're in a post-ideological age. I love that too. We stand for ethics. We do not live in a post-ethical age, I hope, and that's exactly what's going on in this chamber. We stand for ideology, absolutely; for principled ideology, things like this: that there is a right to collective bargaining. Yes, we stand for that ideology. What else do we stand for? Yes, we stand for democracy in the Legislature, that we have a right to debate every bill. We stand for that. We stand for students and the right to have a valuable education that they can afford. Yes, that's an ideological stance that we in the New Democratic Party stand for.

What else do we stand for? We stand for principles of fairness and justice—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** The Constitution; thank you. We stand for the Constitution, the charter, which says that workers have a right to organize. That's what we stand for. We stand for all of that ideology. That's what we stand for.

Do we really think that any of the rights and privileges that we experience in this province came without a minority standing against a tyranny of the majority to defend them? My friends, read your history books. You don't even have to go back that far—10 years, 15 years. Read your history books, and then see yourselves—and I appeal to those across the aisle: You don't have to vote along with Dalton McGuinty. You can vote from principle, from a basis of ethics, from a basis of work, from a basis of principles, ethics and Charter rights and ideology that says, yes, everyone is equal; everyone has a chance to a reasonable life. Absolutely.

Here's to ideology, here's to the students, here's to the NDP and here's to democratic process.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Can I go again?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I don't think so. Further debate?

Ms. Smith has moved government notice of motion 111. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1611 to 1621.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** All those in favour, please stand one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Dombrowsky, Leona	Pendergast, Leeanna
Albanese, Laura	Fonseca, Peter	Phillips, Gerry
Bailey, Robert	Hardeman, Ernie	Qaadri, Shafiq
Balkissoon, Bas	Hoy, Pat	Ramal, Khalil
Bartolucci, Rick	Jaczek, Helena	Rinaldi, Lou
Bentley, Christopher	Kwinter, Monte	Runciman, Robert W.
Brownell, Jim	Mangat, Amrit	Ruprecht, Tony
Bryant, Michael	Matthews, Deborah	Sandals, Liz
Caplan, David	Mauro, Bill	Shurman, Peter
Chan, Michael	Meilleur, Madeleine	Smith, Monique
Colle, Mike	Miller, Norm	Sousa, Charles
Craiton, Kim	Milloy, John	Van Bommel, Maria
Dhillon, Vic	Mitchell, Carol	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dickson, Joe	Moridi, Reza	Zimmer, David

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** All those opposed, please stand one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Hampton, Howard	Prue, Michael
DiNovo, Cheri	Horwath, Andrea	Tabuns, Peter
Gélinas, France	Kormos, Peter	

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 42; the nays are 8.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I declare the motion carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Orders of the day.

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice in regard to the House schedule.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Do we have consent? Agreed.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I move that the House convene at 10:15 a.m. instead of 9 a.m. on Thursday, January 29, 2009, for the purpose of considering government business, following which the House will proceed to oral questions.



**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Orders of the day.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** There being no further business, I move—

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Liberals don't want to work.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** With the help of my colleague, I move adjournment of the House.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House is adjourned until 10:15 a.m., Thursday, January 29.

*The House adjourned at 1624.*

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Aggelonitis, Sophia (LIB)	Hamilton Mountain	
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
<b>Arnott, Ted (PC)</b>	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)</b>	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Broten, Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
<b>Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Economic Development / Ministre du Développement économique
<b>Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
<b>Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
<b>Carroll, Hon. / L'hon. M. Aileen (LIB)</b>	Barrie	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Culture / Ministre de la Culture
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
<b>Crozier, Bruce (LIB)</b>	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)</b>	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
<b>Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)</b>	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
<b>Horwath, Andrea (NDP)</b>	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Carol (LIB)	Huron–Bruce	
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Murdoch, Bill (IND)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)</b>	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)</b>	Scarborough—Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres
		Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches—East York	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)</b>	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of International Trade and Investment / Ministre du Commerce international et de l'Investissement
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London—Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland—Quinte West	
Runciman, Robert W. (PC)	Leeds—Grenville	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)</b>	Nipissing	Minister of Tourism / Ministre du Tourisme
		Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
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		Minister of Energy and Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Infrastructure
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton—Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga—Erindale	Minister of Small Business and Consumer Services / Ministre des Petites Entreprises et des Services aux consommateurs
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	
<b>Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Perth—Wellington	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
<b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>	Simcoe—Grey	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener—Waterloo	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
		Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	



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Peter Tabuns  
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Cheri DiNovo, Helena Jaczek  
Dave Levac, Shafiq Qaadri  
Khalil Ramal, Peter Shurman  
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Howard Hampton, Greg Sorbara  
Norman W. Sterling, David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day





**University labour dispute**  
Ms. Andrea Horwath ..... 4787

**University labour dispute**  
Mr. Bas Balkissoon..... 4788

**University labour dispute**  
Mr. Gilles Bisson ..... 4788

**University labour dispute**  
Mrs. Amrit Mangat ..... 4788

**University labour dispute**  
Ms. Cheri DiNovo ..... 4788

**University labour dispute**  
Mr. David Zimmer..... 4789

**University labour dispute**  
Ms. Andrea Horwath ..... 4789

**University labour dispute**  
Ms. Helena Jaczek ..... 4789

**University labour dispute**  
Mr. Peter Tabuns ..... 4789

**University labour dispute**  
Ms. Andrea Horwath ..... 4789

**University labour dispute**  
Mr. Gilles Bisson..... 4789

**University labour dispute**  
Ms. Andrea Horwath ..... 4790

**University labour dispute**  
Mr. Gilles Bisson..... 4790

**University labour dispute**  
Mr. Michael Prue..... 4790

**University labour dispute**  
Mr. Peter Tabuns ..... 4790

**ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR**

**Time allocation**  
Hon. Monique M. Smith..... 4790  
Mr. Peter Shurman..... 4791  
Mr. Peter Kormos ..... 4791  
Mr. Gilles Bisson..... 4794  
Ms. Cheri DiNovo ..... 4795  
Motion agreed to..... 4796

**Order of business**  
Hon. Monique M. Smith..... 4796  
Motion agreed to..... 4797

# CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Wednesday 28 January 2009 / Mercredi 28 janvier 2009

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	4775
Mr. Peter Shurman.....	4775
<b>Birth of member's grandchild</b>	
Hon. Dwight Duncan.....	4775
Mr. Gilles Bisson.....	4775

## ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

<b>University labour dispute</b>	
Mr. Peter Shurman.....	4775
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	4775
<b>University labour dispute</b>	
Mr. Jim Wilson.....	4776
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	4776
<b>University labour dispute</b>	
Mr. Howard Hampton.....	4777
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	4777
<b>University labour dispute</b>	
Mr. Howard Hampton.....	4778
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	4778
<b>Federal budget</b>	
Mr. Robert W. Runciman.....	4779
Hon. Dwight Duncan.....	4779
<b>Infrastructure program funding</b>	
Mr. Gilles Bisson.....	4779
Hon. George Smitherman.....	4779
<b>Air-rail link</b>	
Mrs. Laura Albanese.....	4780
Hon. James J. Bradley.....	4780
<b>Douglas Memorial Hospital</b>	
Mr. Tim Hudak.....	4781
Hon. David Caplan.....	4781
<b>Poverty</b>	
Mr. Michael Prue.....	4781
Hon. Deborah Matthews.....	4781
<b>Aboriginal affairs</b>	
Mrs. Maria Van Bommel.....	4782
Hon. Christopher Bentley.....	4782
<b>Diagnostic services</b>	
Mr. Robert W. Runciman.....	4782
Hon. David Caplan.....	4783
<b>Child care</b>	
Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	4783
Hon. Deborah Matthews.....	4783

## Agri-food industry

Mrs. Liz Sandals.....	4783
Hon. Leona Dombrowsky.....	4784

## Highway 407

Mr. Ted Arnott.....	4784
Hon. James J. Bradley.....	4784

## DEFERRED VOTES / VOTES DIFFÉRÉS

### York University Labour Disputes Resolution Act, 2009, Bill 145, Mr. Fonseca / Loi de 2009 sur le règlement des conflits de travail à l'Université York, projet de loi 145, M. Fonseca

Second reading agreed to.....	4785
Hon. Peter Fonseca.....	4785

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Ms. Cheri DiNovo.....	4785
Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	4785

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

<b>University labour dispute</b>	
Mr. Peter Shurman.....	4785
<b>CUPE resolution</b>	
Ms. Lisa MacLeod.....	4786
<b>Correctional facility employees</b>	
Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	4786
<b>University labour dispute</b>	
Mr. Kim Craitor.....	4786
<b>University labour dispute</b>	
Mr. Ernie Hardeman.....	4787
<b>University labour dispute</b>	
Mr. Mike Colle.....	4787

## PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

<b>University labour dispute</b>	
Ms. Cheri DiNovo.....	4787
<b>University labour dispute</b>	
Mr. Mike Colle.....	4787

*Continued on inside back cover*



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## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 39<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Thursday 29 January 2009

Jeudi 29 janvier 2009



Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

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Deborah Deller

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 29 January 2009

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 29 janvier 2009

*The House met at 1015.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The Lord's Prayer and a Buddhist prayer.  
*Prayers.*

Colle, Mike  
Craitor, Kim  
Delaney, Bob  
Dickson, Joe  
Dombrowsky, Leona  
Duguid, Brad  
Duncan, Dwight

McMeekin, Ted  
Meilleur, Madeleine  
Miller, Norm  
Milloy, John  
Mitchell, Carol  
Moridi, Reza  
Naqvi, Yasir

Watson, Jim  
Wilkinson, John  
Wilson, Jim  
Wynne, Kathleen O.  
Zimmer, David

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### YORK UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTES RESOLUTION ACT, 2009

### LOI DE 2009 SUR LE RÈGLEMENT DES CONFLITS DE TRAVAIL À L'UNIVERSITÉ YORK

Mr. Fonseca moved third reading of the following bill:  
Bill 145, An Act to resolve labour disputes between York University and Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 3903 / Projet de loi 145, Loi visant à régler les conflits de travail entre l'Université York et la section locale 3903 du Syndicat canadien de la fonction publique.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Pursuant to the order of the House dated January 28, 2009, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Fonseca has moved third reading of Bill 145, An Act to resolve labour disputes between York University and Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 3903.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1019 to 1029.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** All those in favour, please stand one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia  
Albanese, Laura  
Amott, Ted  
Bailey, Robert  
Balkissoon, Bas  
Bartolucci, Rick  
Bentley, Christopher  
Bradley, James J.  
Broten, Laurel C.  
Brownell, Jim  
Cansfield, Donna H.  
Caplan, David  
Carroll, Aileen  
Chan, Michael

Dunlop, Garfield  
Elliott, Christine  
Flynn, Kevin Daniel  
Fonseca, Peter  
Gerretsen, John  
Hardeman, Ernie  
Jaczek, Helena  
Jones, Sylvia  
Kular, Kuldip  
Kwinter, Monte  
Levac, Dave  
Mangat, Amrit  
Matthews, Deborah  
McGuinty, Dalton

Phillips, Gerry  
Pupatello, Sandra  
Qaadri, Shafiq  
Ramal, Khalil  
Ramsay, David  
Rinaldi, Lou  
Runciman, Robert W.  
Ruprecht, Tony  
Sandals, Liz  
Shurman, Peter  
Smith, Monique  
Smitherman, George  
Sousa, Charles  
Takhar, Harinder S.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** All those opposed, please stand one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Bisson, Gilles  
DiNovo, Cheri  
Hampton, Howard

Horwath, Andrea  
Kormos, Peter  
Miller, Paul

Prue, Michael  
Tabuns, Peter

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 61; the nays are 8.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be named as in the motion.

*Third reading agreed to.*

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** My question is to the Premier this morning. While passage of Bill 145 will ensure that York students will be back in class on Monday, I am concerned about quotes attributed to you. Premier, you appear to put the blame for the York fiasco on the administration more than the union. The Premier is entitled to his opinion, but next month, we may face a University of Toronto job action where there's also a CUPE local involved, and I'll get to the 2010 issue in a moment.

Premier, if it's in fact your belief that the York strike was the result of the administration's attitude, what will you say when faced with a U of T strike, if or when that arises? Or, for that matter, with potential province-wide labour stoppages in the majority of our universities, where CUPE contracts are in place when they expire next year?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** First of all, I want to thank all the members who supported this bill for carrying out the responsibility to ensure that young people are back in their classes at the earliest possible opportunity. I also want to take this opportunity to thank our students and

their parents for the remarkable patience and goodwill that they've demonstrated throughout this particular ordeal.

The last point I want to make is that on a go-forward basis, I will encourage all parties involved in these kinds of issues, both at York University and all other Ontario universities, to understand the consequences of the failure of these kinds of negotiations, and to do everything within their power to ensure that these matters are resolved amicably and up front as soon as possible.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Premier, the terms of Bill 145 did not allow for the imposition of any specifics by the arbitrator. Our party went on record as wanting to see a CUPE 3903 contract of not less than three years imposed. This would guarantee York undergrads would be spared from another strike and another disruption of their studies in 17 months, before the completion of their degrees.

Will the Premier tell Ontario students and their parents that he will direct both the arbitrator and his labour minister to impose a three-year term?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** No, I will not do that. We've just passed the bill and the member just voted for that bill. We believe that when there has been a failure to resolve these kinds of issues through the collective bargaining process, and government is called upon to step in and put in place a binding arbitration process, it's important to provide an unfettered discretion to that arbitrator. It's important not to align ourselves with one side or the other, but rather to align ourselves solely and strictly with fairness. That's what this bill does; that's why I've been proud to support it.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Here's the issue, Premier: If you don't take some leadership on this, you could be faced with province-wide strikes and hundreds of thousands of students out of class at the same time.

You showed real reluctance to take action to end this strike. You preferred to sit on the fence while students suffered. You know what they say, Premier: "If you sit on the fence too long, you're going to get painful splinters."

In the future, rather than playing two parties against each other as you did in this case, will you show some leadership? Will you learn from your mistake and will you put students first?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I can understand why my colleague will be seeking to engage in recrimination.

I think what Ontarians want us to do is to find us a way to move forward now. So we've got the bill in place; the arbitrator will move now and work with the parties in the best possible way; the students are going back to the classroom. I think our shared responsibility now is to work with all universities, both the administration and the folks who work in those institutions, to ensure that we can find a means for the collective bargaining process to resolve these kinds of issues on an ongoing basis.

So I'll allow my colleague to engage in recriminations. Our responsibility, on this side of the House, is always to work as hard as we can to bring the sides together and to ensure that we're looking after the students to make sure they're back in the classroom and that we're always pursuing fairness.

## UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** My question is also to the Premier.

Premier, in response to my question yesterday about compensation for York University students, all you did was make a promise that they could add to their student debt. Here's what the students have to say about that in today's Toronto Star: Vanessa Lehan is quoted as saying that your idea of extending OSAP is "no answer"; in fact, she called it "ridiculous" and said it doesn't help at all.

Students like Vanessa now have to make plans to arrange for accommodation for May and June and make up for lost income for those months and increased living expenses. Will you tell these students today exactly how much compensation you will provide and when they can expect to receive their cheques?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'll refer this to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

**Hon. John Milloy:** I'd like to echo the thanks of the Premier to everyone who supported this bill and the fact that we're going to allow 55,000 students to get back to class.

Now that the legislation has been passed, and upon royal assent, there'll be an opportunity for York University to finalize its plans for how they are going to allow students to complete this term. Once we have those details—my officials are working very closely with York University—we plan to make known, as quickly as possible, ways in which students can access additional OSAP funding so that they can receive the financial support they need to finish their funding.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Again, I say to the Premier and the minister, you're simply adding to the students' debt through OSAP. Any grants they would have already received—and you have not said that these will be grants; you've said these will be OSAP loans.

By refusing to take quick action now, you're making an awful situation even worse. Have you not learned the damage that you cause to innocent people when you drag your feet?

So I ask you again: What type of compensation? When are they going to get their cheques? And why are you just going to add to their debt? Could you at least make that debt interest-free?

**Hon. John Milloy:** I know that the honourable member sat around the cabinet table in 2001. I'd like to share a quote with him:

"Now that the university has formally extended the academic year, students in affected programs will be eligible to apply for further funding from the Ontario



student assistance program (OSAP) to cover their additional living expenses for the longer study period....

"Students will be eligible to apply for an additional four weeks of financial support, taking them to the end of the new exam period...."

That was put forward by the Conservative government that he was part of. We are following a similar model. Once we have received the details from York University of their plans to extend the term, we will be adopting a similar model to the one that his government did when he was sitting around the cabinet table.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** You don't know your history very well, Minister. In the strike in 2001, the students didn't lose class time. Many, many professors crossed the picket line and taught the students. They weren't out of pocket for accommodation expenses; the school year wasn't extended; they were never out of the classroom. So it's an entirely different situation, and I ask you again, on behalf of the 50,000 students: Have a heart. They deserve some compensation. They are going to lose the month of May and perhaps half of June. If they lose the month of May, in terms of working, if they worked four weeks at minimum wage, that's \$1,400. The student union says, on top of that, there's another \$800 in tuition that they paid for, but they're not going to have classroom time because the school year is going to be cut short by at least a month.

Have a heart. It's a different situation than in 2001; stop hiding behind that. You've got your facts wrong. Please compensate the students. I ask you on behalf of them. They deserve it. They are the innocent victims in this strike and they deserve compensation from their government.

1040

**Hon. John Milloy:** If anyone should get their facts straight, it's the member opposite. The fact of the matter is that during the strike when his government was in power, the school term was extended by four weeks. It is a very comparable situation.

The other fact that I would remind the honourable member of is that through the OSAP system, student loans for undergraduates are capped at \$7,000. Therefore, as we devise the new program for the extension, students will be eligible under the so-called OSOG program to get relief for loans that total over \$7,000 for the academic year. We will be providing a suite of assistance to them, and those details will come forward.

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** My question is for the Premier. We've heard a lot about putting students first and doing what is best for them, and I know the Premier wants to believe that now, by simply legislating the workers back, everything is fixed.

My question is this: Can the Premier tell us how the needs of York University students will be served by

continuing a scenario where many of their teachers will continue to be paid wages that are below the poverty line?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** First of all, I want to congratulate CUPE for its decision to, as quickly as possible, get this dispute behind them, return to their classes and provide the excellent-quality instruction that is available to students at York University. I want to thank them for pursuing this.

The leader of the NDP says that there are remaining issues, outstanding issues. I acknowledge that. We've turned this matter over to a process of binding arbitration. We expect that that will be resolved sooner rather than later, in a way that is as fair as possible to both sides. I expect that both sides will do everything they need to do—it may not be easy—to reconcile outstanding differences and to conduct themselves in a way that serves the best interests of the students.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I notice that once again the Premier didn't answer the question. He has to know that what's happening at York University is literally that hundreds of people who were on the picket line have been teaching and working and have been paid wages that are less than the poverty line.

The Premier should also know that quality planning, quality teaching and quality evaluation at the university level is demanding and it's time-consuming. Time spent planning a course has a direct impact on the quality of education that students receive.

My question is this: How are the needs of York University students served by forcing the contract faculty—who do most of the teaching—to continue to exist on short-term contracts of one year or less when they don't know from one semester to the next what courses they will be teaching or if they'll be teaching at all?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** My colleague asks that I insinuate myself into the employment relationship—

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** It's just the education system; how are you responsible?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** —between the administration and the faculty, and I'm not prepared to do that.

But in response to the heckle, let me say this: Our responsibility is to ensure that we continue to provide adequate levels of funding to our post-secondary system. We are putting in \$6.2 billion over five years in our colleges and universities. We've increased student assistance by \$1.5 billion. We've increased spaces in our colleges and universities by some 100,000. This government has done more than any predecessor government within the last two decades to support good-quality post-secondary education for all of Ontario's young people.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Premier, the fact is, you and your government have inserted yourselves rather directly into this scenario. The further fact is, while you continue to pump out the press releases, Ontario is next to last in



North America in terms of per capita funding for the university system.

But this is really about the future of the system. Tenured professors provide quality instruction based on years of experience. Tenured professors have job security; they can engage in research and exploration of ideas and share that with their students. But when more and more professors retire and are replaced by part-time contract staff who are underpaid, with no job security, those important things don't happen in the university.

My question is this: How are the needs of York students served by this calculated systemic replacement of tenured professors by underpaid, no-job-security contract staff?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, I'm proud of the record that we've amassed so far. Is there more work to be done? Absolutely.

One of the things I've been talking about, both at home and abroad, is that we now have the highest rate of post-secondary education in the western world. Some 40% of Ontarians have achieved some level of post-secondary education. But here's another issue. Experts tell us that 70% of the jobs of the future are going to require some element of post-secondary education. We're only at 40%. So we're going to have to find a way together to ensure that we create still more opportunities for young people and Ontarians of all ages to pursue education at the post-secondary level. We've put in \$6.2 billion. Obviously we're going to have to find a way to do more to create more opportunities for young people and all Ontarians.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** New question?

#### UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Again, to the Premier: The Premier likes to give speeches about higher education, but what people are witnessing today is in fact what the McGuinty government has failed to do with respect to higher education. We hear from professors from across this province who say that what's happening at York is happening elsewhere. As professors retire, they are not being replaced by professors; they're being replaced by contract workers who have no job security, who are underpaid, who don't know if they're going to be there next year, have little time to engage in research or the exploration of ideas.

My question is this: Does the McGuinty government really believe that you're doing something by legislating an end to the debate and the discussion that was happening at York University? Do you really believe you're doing something good? Because from our perspective, you are simply trying to sweep the issues under the carpet.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I believe we did what we had to do under the circumstances. Let me tell you again something about our record, because I think it's worthy of recognition: \$6.2 billion over five years; \$1.5 billion more in student assistance. We're helping 150,000 more

students with financial assistance; 120,000 students are getting grants when, in the past, none got them. We've hired 3,300 new faculty. There are 14,000 new graduate spaces. We froze tuition for two consecutive years and we've put in, so far, \$200 million to repair college and university campus buildings. Is there more to be done? Absolutely. Have we done something? Absolutely.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Premier, you can keep on giving those speeches and keep on pumping out those press releases. Professors from around the province have told us that in fact Ontario is falling further behind. Ontario is 10th out of 10 provinces in Canada. Ontario is next to the bottom in North America in terms of the per capita funding of the university system. But the Premier tries to escape the issue again. What you did at York University is an attempt to literally sweep it all under the carpet; sweep under the carpet the fact that these are very dedicated people who teach, live on wages, many of them that are below the poverty line, and work with no job security. Is that the future that Dalton McGuinty and the McGuinty government offer university students and the university system for Ontario?

1050

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** If we want to see into the future, I think it's helpful to take a look at our past. What have we done in government? I think that we've clearly demonstrated our commitment to education all the way from JK through to post-doctoral programs with our massive levels of investment that complement that, into research, development and commercialization of ideas that are coming out of our colleges, our universities and our hospitals.

We understand that in a global, knowledge-based economy it has never been more important than for us, together, to continue to find new ways to support post-secondary education. It's about investing in what economists call our human capital. It's about making sure that all young people have all the opportunities they need to succeed and be the best that they can be. Those are the ideals that informed our actions. They inspire our efforts and they will continue to do so on a go-forward basis.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Once again, the Premier wants to talk about ideals and ignore the reality of what is happening. The reality of what is happening, Premier, is the sorry situation at York University, where teachers continue to work for wages that are less than the poverty line, where they have no job security, where full-time professors are not being replaced. That is the reality.

The other reality is this: By your actions, you've sent a message to other university administrators: "You don't have to bargain in good faith. You don't have to deal with the real issues at your university. All you have to do is stall and stall and stall, and the McGuinty government will come in and sweep everything under the carpet with back-to-work legislation." Premier, that is the reality.



Is that going to continue to be the reality under the McGuinty government, or are we going to see real investment in universities and colleges instead of just speeches and words?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I don't know about my colleague, but I call \$6.2 billion real investment. Per student funding is up 21% since 2003.

Again, I'm more than prepared to acknowledge that there is more to be done. We've achieved a level of 40% of our population having some level of post-secondary education. We're going to have to do better. We're going to have to set our targets a little bit higher.

I met with Roger Martin a few days ago, and he told me once again that on a per capita basis, twice as many American young people are pursuing master-level degrees than in Ontario. We need to raise our aspirational levels when it comes to Ontario families. We need to find more ways to encourage more young people to pursue education at the post-secondary level. I think we put a really solid and strong down payment on that with—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you, Premier. New question.

#### TOBACCO CONTROL

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** Speaker, through you to the Premier: A few weeks ago there was an ad in eastern Ontario papers from the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark health unit looking to hire 15-year-olds as test shoppers under the Smoke-Free Ontario Act. Their job, apparently, is to go into convenience stores and attempt to purchase cigarettes and, some might suggest, induce store clerks to break the law.

Premier, health units receive significant funding from the province. Do you believe this kind of sting approach, using underaged teens, is an appropriate and ethical use of tax dollars?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** This is a long-standing practice in the province of Ontario. I would have hoped that my friend would have said his real concern was selling cigarettes to underaged young people. That's what we're after here. That's the crux of the matter. These decisions are made by the local health unit, but I must say that I support this practice.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** A typical holier-than-thou Liberal response.

We're advised that a significant number of health units engage in this kind of entrapment activity, using teens as bait. Small businesses in this province are having a tough time keeping their heads above these tough economic waters, yet here is just another example of tax dollars being used in a morally inappropriate manner to make their existence even more challenging—and you do this while sitting on your hands and looking the other way at scores of illegal aboriginal smoke shacks operating with impunity. Studies show that one in three cigarettes collected from high schools is illegal. That's okay, I guess, across the way here.

If you're serious about stopping teen smoking, when will you evenly enforce the law and stop unethical efforts to entrap law-abiding small business people?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Smoking remains the number one preventable cause of death in Ontario. Some 16,000 Ontarians continue to die every year from smoking-related illnesses.

My colleague says he's concerned about the unfortunate position this might place small business people in. First of all, I believe the overwhelming majority of our small business people want to co-operate in every way possible and are fully respectful of the law. If there is a concern in that regard, it is easily addressed: Just respect the law. You won't have to worry about any of these kinds of issues; just respect the law. If somebody is coming in to purchase cigarettes from you, follow the law. Make sure you're obtaining the appropriate identification and make sure that you are doing everything we want to do as a society, which is to raise a smoke-free generation so that we can wean ourselves off this terrible product.

#### NUCLEAR SAFETY

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** My question is to the Minister of the Environment. On December 5, Chalk River had a radioactive water leak. There are 7,000 litres of radioactive water a day going into the Ottawa River. What are you doing to protect the residents of the Ottawa Valley?

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** As the member well knows, all nuclear issues basically relate to the federal government. I know we've been in touch with them. We're concerned about it as well. I can tell you, we're taking all the necessary steps to make sure that the safety and health of the citizens of the Ottawa Valley who are affected by the water streams are fully protected.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I'm appreciative of the minister's sentiments in this matter. You have a responsibility to protect the residents of this province—the residents who have had to rely on the Toronto Sun to find out what's going on, not from you. If you're concerned, if you're taking all necessary measures, tell us: What are you actually doing to protect the health of the people who rely on that river? Tell us in the House right now.

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** As I indicated before, we are in contact with the nuclear authorities there. We are making sure that the discharge that goes into the Ottawa River—that the citizens who are along the riverside on both sides are fully protected from a health and safety security viewpoint.

#### HAZARDOUS WASTE

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** My question is to the Minister of the Environment. There is a growing understanding that we must reduce the impact we have on our planet. The ways of generations past are simply unsustainable. One way in which we need to change our perspective and



our actions is in regard to how we deal with waste we create.

I know that people in my community want to do more to protect our environment and make greener choices. I believe that we should be helping Ontarians make the right choices, to make it easier to properly dispose of waste and divert it from our landfills into new, value-added products. I was interested to learn last week that a new program was launched that does just that for hazardous waste products.

I know that we all have hazardous products like old paint, solvents, oil filters and batteries under the sink or in the garage, products that can harm our environment if they are poured down the drain or thrown into the garbage—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you for the question, Minister?

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** Yes, we did launch a program last week with Stewardship Ontario to make sure that hazardous materials such as paints, solvents and batteries do not end up in our landfill sites or poured down the drains of our water systems.

1100

Over the next year, we will double the number of hazardous waste pickup days. The amount of tonnage that will be collected that way will increase from something like 16,000 tonnes to over 32,000 tonnes. As a matter of fact, all Ontarians can go on the DoWhatYouCan.ca website and find out exactly to whom and where they can deliver these hazardous materials to make sure that they don't end up in our landfill sites. Several of our major retailers, such as Home Depot, Rona and Jiffy Lube, are already taking back these materials.

We want to expand the program later on as well to take in other hazardous material. The number-one concern is to make sure that these hazardous materials do not end up in our landfill sites or in our water systems.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** Ensuring that these materials do not go into the garbage or get poured down the drain is an important step. As a Toronto Star editorial said, "This is a major improvement." It is also a good example of government and business working together to find solutions.

We need to look at how we deal with waste in a different way. Some products, like those covered by the Do What You Can program, contain toxics that have a serious impact on our environment if they are not disposed of properly. Other items harm our environment when they are unnecessarily thrown into landfills.

Instead of wasting valuable materials and energy, we should be ensuring that these items are reused and recycled. A system where what we once thought of as garbage is collected and reused or converted into another material has so many spinoff benefits. They lower energy costs; we're saving raw material; fewer toxic substances; and new green industries—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you, Minister?

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** That's exactly what our discussion paper Toward Zero Waste is all about. We are developing plans not only with respect to hazardous waste, and there are three different phases to it over the next year or so; we're also developing a plan with respect to tire recycling; we're developing a plan right now with respect to electronic waste.

The main purpose is to make sure that these products are being reused and recycled and do not end up in our landfill sites where they're not doing anybody any good.

## ELEMENTARY TEACHERS

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** My question is to the Minister of Education. Minister, I've asked you twice over the past week what your plan is for coming to an agreement with the Elementary Teachers' Federation and twice you have avoided answering.

Your government talks a big game about how the York administration should have handled their own negotiations, but you're no closer to an agreement with the Elementary Teachers' Federation than you were last June. In fact, you're further away because of the unusual decision to worsen your offer at December 1.

The truth is, you simply don't have a plan beyond offering teachers 12% over four years. When that failed—you don't seem to have a plan B. Minister, what assurance can you give Ontario parents that there will not be a disruption in elementary education coming this March?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** First of all, I want to reassure the parents and the community members who are listening that, right now, what's happening is, the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario is in local discussions with their school boards. We have, in this province right now—every education employee group is in a provincial framework agreement except the elementary teachers, and we have, as it stands now, 386 of 394 local agreements signed, sealed; those are in place.

What I want to say is that if you look at our record, it's one of labour peace and stability. We are currently on a track where, across the province, those agreements are in place. If you look at the record of the party across the floor, 26 million days of student time lost from our schools—26 million school days lost because of the constant labour unrest that that government had while they were in office.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** We're running on the government's record of the day, and you know what? Your talk, Minister, can't change the fact that you are running on bought time—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Order.

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** —throughout the first term. Now that the economy is slowing down and you don't



have the money to throw at your problems, those relations are falling apart.

Minister, you know that school boards only have until tomorrow to settle contract details because of your government's deadline. Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation district 12 president Doug Jolliffe says, "The chance to work together will be lost, and yet another era of bitter relations will ensue."

Minister, what is your government's plan B?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Plan A is going to work, so we don't need a plan B. Plan A is going to work, and plan A is working. We have got 386 of 394 agreements in place.

Doug Jolliffe and the Toronto District School Board are in the process of having their local conversation because I know that Doug Jolliffe and the people at the Toronto District School Board, as with all the boards across the province, are very interested in what happens to our kids. They are putting kids at the centre, as in fact we have.

We have made sure that our labour relations with our education sector have been second to none. We have a fine working relationship, which is why we've got so many agreements in place that are four-year agreements.

The member opposite really can't decide what it is they're looking for. On one hand, she is saying more money should go into these agreements; on the other hand, she's trying to lambaste us for putting too much money in. What we're doing is putting reasonable agreements in place. We will—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. New question?

#### PROVINCIAL PURCHASING POLICY

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** A question to the Premier: Why is this Liberal government forcing provincial enforcement officers in Ontario to wear uniforms made in China?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Government Services.

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** Our procurement policies are set up to ensure that our government obtains value for money through the use of an open competitive process to acquire goods and services. Our policies are designed to ensure openness, fairness and transparency. I just want to say that of the 4,500 vendors that we have, 96% of them are Ontario-based companies.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Ministry of Transportation officers—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Order. Stop the clock. We've got 24 minutes to go, and I'd like to hear the questions and the responses that are going to be put to us in those 24 minutes. Your co-operation would be appreciated.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Ministry of Transportation officers in Ontario, the highway enforcement officers, find it reprehensible that they're forced to wear an inferior product and one that has "Made in China" sewed into the seams when in the past those same uniforms were made in Canada.

How does it make sense to send Ontario tax dollars overseas when we have a clothing industry here in Canada that's ailing?

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** I'd just say once again, that of the 4,500 suppliers that this government uses to procure the products that are used in the public service, 95% of those are located right here in Ontario. In fact, if you look at Canadian procurement, one tenth of 1%, I believe, is procured from a supplier outside of Canada. The procurement is done with an Ontario-based company, and that's something that our government's very, very proud of.

#### ORDER OF ONTARIO

**Mr. Dave Levac:** My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. As many people in this Legislature are aware, on January 22, at a ceremony here at the Legislature, 27 very worthy individuals were invested into the Order of Ontario by the Lieutenant Governor. I was very pleased to personally attend the investiture and see and hear first-hand about the outstanding Ontarians from diverse backgrounds being recognized for their efforts in philanthropy, volunteerism, medicine, business, science, sports and culture. It's the highest civilian award in Ontario.

Particularly, I was pleased to see from the riding of Brant our very own Mary Welsh invested into the Order of Ontario for her over 35 years of community service and volunteerism. It's a celebration worth paying attention to and everyone celebrating together.

1110

Minister, can you please share with our colleagues and Ontarians a brief history of the Order of Ontario and highlight some of the accomplishments of these fantastic members of our community?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** My thanks to the honourable member for his attention to the Order of Ontario.

The Order of Ontario is the highest honour that the province can bestow upon an individual to recognize outstanding contributions to Ontario.

This year's inductees are joining the likes of Dr. Sheela Basrur, Michael "Pinball" Clemons and Norman Jewison as Ontario greats in the Order of Ontario.

This year, the Order of Ontario advisory committee received close to 400 nominations and selected 27 outstanding individuals. This year's inductees include former Premier David Peterson, former Chief Justice Patrick LeSage, former Olympic figure skater Barbara Ann Scott-King and former Secretary of the Cabinet Tony Dean, along with 23 other deserving individuals.

We are lucky in Ontario to have so many exemplary individuals to choose from to honour with Ontario's highest official award.



**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Dave Levac:** While some in this place find this boring, I think it's great to celebrate great Ontarians, and I would like to thank the minister for doing so. Minister, thank you very much.

I wholeheartedly agree with you that this year's class of inductees provides an example for all Ontarians, especially some in here, to look up to. We also have many, many more Ontarians who give well beyond what they get.

I would like to add my personal congratulations to all the inductees, but in particular, Mary Welsh from the great riding of Brant.

Minister, all the members here—I hope—and many people watching at home know first-hand of an Ontarian who deserves to be nominated for the Order of Ontario. We've got many, many more Ontarians who deserve this honour.

Minister, can you share with the members of this Legislature the process of how a person may be invested into the Order of Ontario?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** My thanks again to the member from Brant for being a strong supporter of the Order of Ontario.

Each year, individuals are nominated for the order by members of the public. The nominations are then reviewed by an advisory council, who then recommend successful nominees to the Lieutenant Governor. Nominees must be residents or former long-term residents of Ontario. No elected federal, provincial or municipal representative may be appointed while still in office.

Ontarians who know an extraordinary individual whom they wish to nominate: The process is open until March 16 of this year. Nomination forms may be found online on my ministry's website.

Once again, I would like to congratulate all 27 new inductees to the Order of Ontario. They are examples for us all.

## EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I have a question for the Minister of Education regarding new schools in Parry Sound district.

Minister, a new high school is approved and in the planning process to replace the Almaguin Highlands Secondary School in east Parry Sound. The community is very excited about the new school and has been working hard to develop a school that will meet community needs. It will be a true community school, with affordable features like a fitness room, a cafetorium and a multi-purpose room. They want to build a quality school that will be around 50 years from now.

They also want to build a green school; in particular, they would like to equip it with a ground-source heat pump to heat and cool the school. The heat pump would save significant energy over the long term. Other schools,

like Valley View Public School in Sudbury, have been equipped with a ground-source heat pump.

Minister, with the need for energy-efficient buildings, will you provide the necessary funding so that the new Almaguin Highlands Secondary School will be a quality school and a green school, with a ground-source heat pump?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Thank you to the member opposite for the question. He will know that in June 2007, I was at the announcement for the funding for the Almaguin school and have actually visited Valley View school, as well. So I'm very aware of the community's needs, and I'm very aware of the high standards that many of our schools are being built to.

That's why we actually have increased our capital building benchmarks by 7%, in order to allow for that kind of green initiative in our schools. It's extremely important, and I share the member opposite's concern that we build sustainable schools for the future. We're doing what we can to make sure the funding benchmarks are upgraded so that those initiatives can go forward.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** The building committee says that the allotment is only 3.5% and it's not sufficient to do some of the green initiatives they would like to do.

In west Parry Sound, the Near North District School Board, with help from the community, has spent a lot of time going through the pupil accommodation review process to determine elementary school needs. The result of the process is the recommendation to close two existing schools and to build one new school in Parry Sound. The trustees of the board have voted to request funds from the Ministry of Education to build the new school. Now the process seems to have stalled, yet in a neighbouring riding, funding has been announced for a new school where the review process is not even completed. Minister, what is the status of the proposed new elementary school in Parry Sound?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I have to say that I am not as familiar with that particular initiative. I will get back to you. I'll have someone speak with you today about exactly what the status of that is.

I want to say that it is really important that communities take hold of these projects and set their priorities and make sure that they work with the ministry, because there is always going to be a vast need for upgrading of schools, for new schools, school consolidations. So the ministry works with every single board in the province, all 72 boards, to make sure that we know what their priorities are and we know what the process is. I have to say that the accommodation review guidelines that have been put in place allow for a substantial amount of community input into that process. So it means that we're getting good decisions at the local level, and there has to be that ongoing discussion with the ministry so that the community's priorities are clear.

I will get back to the member opposite about that particular project.



## SPECIAL CARE HOMES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour le ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée.

On June 6, 2008, the Goodfellow home for special care in Sudbury was shut down as a result of sexual abuse allegations, and 10 residents were moved out of my riding to Ottawa. Again, on January 13, 2009, two weeks ago, sexual abuse charges were laid against the operator of the St. Clair Lodge home for special care, this time in Hamilton. Can the minister guarantee that his ministry is inspecting all homes for special care across Ontario every two weeks, as per regulation, to protect the vulnerable residents of these homes?

**Hon. David Caplan:** I don't believe that homes for special care fall under the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. I think the member would rather ask this question of the Minister of Community and Social Services.

What I can tell you is that in fact the ministry does take its inspection role very seriously in the areas under its purview, like long-term care, home care and hospitals. In fact, we have worked to strengthen the ability of our regulatory colleges with a bill that we have recently introduced related to inspection powers on facilities. I know the member is well aware of it. So I know the member wouldn't want to suggest that the ministry is not upholding the role when in fact it does take this role very seriously. It does have inspectors in the areas under its purview. I would certainly take the question under advisement, as these homes fall under another ministry's jurisdiction.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** We will do homework, due process, too. In the home for special care in Sudbury, it is certainly the Ministry of Health that's responsible for inspections, and the same with the one in Hamilton.

The residents at the Goodfellow home for special care and their families don't ever recall seeing inspectors, and the residents and their families don't ever recall being interviewed. My office has been trying to find out how often inspections were done at the Goodfellow home for special care, but they just can't get an answer from staff at the Ministry of Health. Were inspections performed bi-weekly, as per regulation, at the Goodfellow home for special care in Sudbury? It is your ministry's responsibility.

1120

**Hon. David Caplan:** I don't believe the member is correct. I'll take the question under advisement and work to get an answer for the member, but I can tell you that I do not believe the member is correct in the facts she has presented. I don't believe that homes for special care fall under the Ministry of Health. In fact, they fall under municipal bylaw, I do understand. I will look into the matter, as the member has presented these cases, and will follow up with a response to the member. As I say, I do not believe the member is correct that these fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term

Care, but will do my best and endeavour to provide an answer for her in due course.

## HOSPITAL SERVICES

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. I know that hospitals sometimes experience a sudden increase in patients who need access to critical care services. Serious multi-vehicle car accidents, a spike in the number of people going into cardiac arrest, a sudden life-threatening outbreak: all of these things can cause a surge in demand for critical care services. I know Ontario health providers and administrators learned a lot of lessons from the SARS outbreak, and even made us all realize how coordination between and within hospitals can help save lives.

I will ask the Minister of Health to tell the House what steps he is taking to ensure that hospitals can handle major surges in demand for critical care.

**Hon. David Caplan:** This question definitely does fall under the purview of the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, and I would like to thank the member from Northumberland-Quinte West for asking such an important question. This issue not only affects constituents in his riding but people right across the province of Ontario.

I'm pleased to tell you about our new surge management program, an innovation that began as a pilot project in the Champlain LHIN. Due to its success in the Ottawa area, we are now rolling it out right across the province. This program will give hospital staff the tools they need to better handle dramatic increases of patients who are in life-threatening situations. It will ensure that patients are transferred from an emergency room or operating room to a critical care service as quickly as possible. It has the potential to reduce ambulance offload delays as well as reduce emergency room and surgery wait times. It will allow hospitals to get together and coordinate their responses and resources to help a hospital facing an overwhelming increase in critical care patients.

I do look forward to the supplementary. It's an excellent question from the member.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** I would like to thank the Minister of Health for his commitment to such an important initiative. Improving coordination within hospitals and communication between hospitals will no doubt help ensure that critically ill patients will get the care they need, when they need it. I know implementing a program of this size and scope is likely not a simple task, but I also know that there is a need for programs like this. I ask the Minister of Health: When can my constituents—indeed, the rest of Ontario—expect to see this program rolled out across the province?

**Hon. David Caplan:** Again, a very good question from the member. I can tell him and all members of this House that, starting this month, 124 Ontario hospitals began implementing the surge management program. By March 2010, the program will be fully implemented right across Ontario. Under the leadership of Dr. Bernard



Lawless, our provincial lead for critical care and trauma, Ontario's Critical Care Secretariat is working hard to help hospitals learn how to adapt and implement the program.

I look forward to working with the secretariat over the coming months to help the local health integration networks learn about the surge capacity program and its benefits. Our government takes critical care services seriously. In fact, in 2006 we launched our critical care strategy, which included a \$90-million annual investment into critical care services. The strategy has helped to lower wait times and support—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. New question.

### AGGREGATE EXTRACTION

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. Minister, recently—I believe January 15 was the final court date—the Nichols gravel pit in Hagersville, a 233-acre site, has been operating for a period of time now without a licence. These trucks are taking gravel and aggregate in and out of the limestone quarry for an extended period of time, yet continue to operate day after day without a licence. Minister, how can this pit continue on to operate in breach of the law, without a licence?

**Hon. Donna H. Cansfield:** I thank the member for the question. As you know, we take this very seriously. Under the Aggregate Resources Act, a permit is required, but in this particular case there are extenuating circumstances. We are actually in court with some issues, so I have to be very cautious in my approach to answering your questions, but I would be more than happy to have a conversation with you.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** Minister, when you're dealing with aggregates anywhere in the province, there's a lot of controversy with a lot of individuals on the removal of the aggregate that takes place near the groundwater discharge, or the groundwater removal, and the trucking that takes place in moving the aggregate back and forth. I'm sure there are a lot of situations, but this isn't something that has just happened recently; it's an issue that has been going on for several years now.

I'm sure the House would like to know exactly some of those key situations that need to be addressed that we can try. Possibly there are some suggestions that we may be able to come forward with. Quite possibly, maybe it's a Ministry of Transportation issue, where the trucks are no longer allowed to participate in removing the aggregate from that particular site. Maybe you can enlighten us on some of the possibilities.

**Hon. Donna H. Cansfield:** Under the Aggregate Resources Act, we have the responsibility in the Ministry of Natural Resources for permitting the aggregate to be extracted. There's a very onerous process that they must go through. Attached to that is the requirement from the Ministry of the Environment for the taking of water. If

the Ministry of the Environment is not happy, they do not get a permit. It's really quite simple. It's a very rigorous process to ensure that water protection is primary—that, in fact, they're satisfied.

When it comes to the actual hauling, unless the aggregate is based on crown land and it's a crown road, we're dealing with municipal roads. Then the municipality must agree to the haulage from that particular site. Once the proponent has satisfied that need for the municipality, again, we're more than happy to be able to issue that permit.

The Aggregate Resources Act is a very clear act that deals with extraction of a resource close to source—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you, Minister. New question.

### CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Minister of Children and Youth Services. What changes is this minister preparing to make to the guidelines for funding special supports for children with complex multiple needs?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Let me assure the member opposite that we are not planning to make any changes to the funding for this program.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I asked the minister specifically about the guidelines. Destany Leonard, nine, of Fort Frances, has cerebral palsy and has received support for her complex special needs at home for the past four years. Destany attends school, lives happily at home and has the full support of her community and local service provider, Integrated Services Northwest. Her father was recently informed that Destany will no longer be eligible for ministry funding because the guidelines are changing in April.

Just now, I asked the minister to specify which changes are coming to funding for children with complex special needs. Parents across Ontario, Minister, want to know. Will the minister guarantee that children like Destany with severe disabilities will receive the services they need to keep them at home and in their community?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Let me assure the member opposite that we are working very, very hard to make sure that kids with special needs and youth with special needs do have access to the services that they need. We are working hard to reduce waiting times for these children. Let me just say that these kids have very complex and very special needs, and we are determined to be there for them and to be there for their families.

We're working with communities to provide services to these children. There are no changes being made as to how the ministry funds complex special needs; we're simply formalizing the existing business practices. I can assure the member and the House that no child currently receiving services will lose services. We are not cutting funding; in fact, we've actually increased funding with an extra \$19.8 million in the 2008 budget.

I would be more than happy to look into this particular case.



## RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** My question is to the Minister of Research and Innovation. Minister, there is no doubt that the auto sector is currently facing some of the most serious challenges in its history, but with challenge comes change. As the auto sector faces a shift in consumer demand towards cleaner and greener automobiles, Ontario companies are stepping up to fill the void.

One such company is the Woodbridge Group. Woodbridge's BioFoam is used in car seats, cushions, head restraints and armrests, and now the company is developing new uses for this material. One of these is a product that combines BioFoam with other natural fibres that make car headliners that are lighter and provide better cabin sound quality.

Reports show that the global renewable bioproducts industry is expected to exceed \$125 billion in revenue by the year 2010. What is the Ministry of Research and Innovation doing to help young and innovative companies, such as the Woodbridge Group, grow and capture—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you, Minister of Research and Innovation.

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I share with the members of the House that we have a large manufacturing base here in Ontario, and we're very proud of it. But many of the things that we make are made from petroleum, from resources that we draw from the ground; think of things like plastics and foam. So there's a new brand of manufacturing called biomanufacturing, where we take renewable carbon, which we are blessed with in this province, in agriculture and forestry, and we use those things as the new feedstocks for this new industry.

I was very pleased to join the member at Woodbridge. We were welcomed by the CEO, Bob Magee, and we

made announcements of some \$2.5 million worth of funding from the Ontario BioAuto Council. I want to thank my good friend the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs for working with us on this initiative. There are three companies that were able to receive funding for this cutting-edge new commercialization of biomaterials. They are GreenCore Composites, which is a University of Toronto spinoff; Cambridge-based CG Tower, a North American leader; and Woodbridge, all creating new materials specifically for the auto industry that are greener, lighter—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you, Minister.

## ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** Mr. Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to move a motion respecting the adjournment of the House.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Do we have consent? Agreed.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I move that the House do now adjourn and stand adjourned until February 17, 2009.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** This House is now adjourned until February 17, 2009, at 9 of the clock.

*The House adjourned at 1133.*

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Aggelonitis, Sophia (LIB)	Hamilton Mountain	
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
<b>Arnott, Ted (PC)</b>	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Attorney General / Procureur général
<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)</b>	London West / London-Ouest	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Broten, Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
<b>Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Economic Development / Ministre du Développement économique Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
<b>Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
<b>Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
<b>Carroll, Hon. / L'hon. M. Aileen (LIB)</b>	Barrie	Minister of Culture / Ministre de la Culture Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craiton, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
<b>Crozier, Bruce (LIB)</b>	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)</b>	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
<b>Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)</b>	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
<b>Horwath, Andrea (NDP)</b>	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Carol (LIB)	Huron–Bruce	
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Murdoch, Bill (IND)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener-Conestoga	
<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)</b>	Elgin-Middlesex-London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)</b>	Scarborough-Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres
		Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches-East York	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)</b>	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of International Trade and Investment / Ministre du Commerce international et de l'Investissement
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London-Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming-Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland-Quinte West	
Runciman, Robert W. (PC)	Leeds-Grenville	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)</b>	Nipissing	Minister of Tourism / Ministre du Tourisme
		Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
<b>Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Deputy Premier / Vice-premier ministre
		Minister of Energy and Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Infrastructure
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton-Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto-Danforth	
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga-Erindale	Minister of Small Business and Consumer Services / Ministre des Petites Entreprises et des Services aux consommateurs
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	
<b>Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Perth-Wellington	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
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Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener-Waterloo	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
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<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
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## CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Thursday 29 January 2009 / Jeudi 29 janvier 2009

### ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

<b>York University Labour Disputes Resolution Act, 2009, Bill 145, Mr. Fonseca / Loi de 2009 sur le règlement des conflits de travail à l'Université York, projet de loi 145, M. Fonseca</b>	
Third reading agreed to .....	4799

### ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

<b>University labour dispute</b>	
Mr. Peter Shurman .....	4799
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	4799
<b>University labour dispute</b>	
Mr. Jim Wilson .....	4800
Hon. John Milloy .....	4800
<b>University labour dispute</b>	
Mr. Howard Hampton .....	4801
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	4801
<b>University labour dispute</b>	
Mr. Howard Hampton .....	4802
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	4802
<b>Tobacco control</b>	
Mr. Robert W. Runciman .....	4803
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	4803
<b>Nuclear safety</b>	
Mr. Peter Tabuns .....	4803
Hon. John Gerretsen .....	4803
<b>Hazardous waste</b>	
Mr. Bas Balkissoon .....	4803
Hon. John Gerretsen .....	4804

<b>Elementary teachers</b>	
Mrs. Joyce Savoline .....	4804
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne .....	4804
<b>Provincial purchasing policy</b>	
Mr. Peter Kormos .....	4805
Hon. Ted McMeekin .....	4805
<b>Order of Ontario</b>	
Mr. Dave Levac .....	4805
Hon. Michael Chan .....	4805
<b>Education funding</b>	
Mr. Norm Miller .....	4806
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne .....	4806
<b>Special care homes</b>	
Mme France Gélinas .....	4807
Hon. David Caplan .....	4807
<b>Hospital services</b>	
Mr. Lou Rinaldi .....	4807
Hon. David Caplan .....	4807
<b>Aggregate extraction</b>	
Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette .....	4808
Hon. Donna H. Cansfield .....	4808
<b>Children with special needs</b>	
Ms. Andrea Horwath .....	4808
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	4808
<b>Research and innovation</b>	
Mr. Joe Dickson .....	4809
Hon. John Wilkinson .....	4809
<b>Adjournment of the House</b>	
Hon. Monique M. Smith .....	4809
Motion agreed to .....	4809



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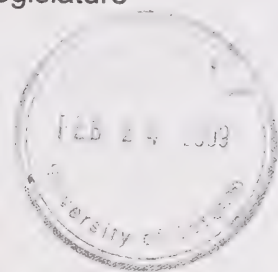
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**Tuesday 17 February 2009**

**Mardi 17 février 2009**

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk  
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Deborah Deller

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF Ontario

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Tuesday 17 February 2009

Mardi 17 février 2009

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the Hindu prayer.

*Prayers.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

REGULATED HEALTH PROFESSIONS  
AMENDMENT ACT, 2009LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT LA LOI  
SUR LES PROFESSIONS DE LA SANTÉ  
RÉGLEMENTÉES

Ms. Smith, on behalf of Mr. Caplan, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 141, An Act to amend the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 / Projet de loi 141, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1991 sur les professions de la santé réglementées.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Debate?

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** Mr. Speaker, I'm sharing all of my time with the member from Scarborough—Rouge River this morning.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** I'm pleased to speak on Bill 141, the Regulated Health Professions Amendment Act, 2009. This bill would amend the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991, to give colleges the authority to make regulations providing for the direct observation of a member in his or her practice, including the direct observation by inspectors of procedures performed by a member on a patient during a college inspection or examination.

The amendment supports the government's commitment to improve patient safety and quality of health care services in Ontario by providing the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario and all of the other health regulatory colleges in the province with the tools they need to conduct comprehensive facility inspections that support their mandate to protect the public.

This amendment to the RHPA was introduced late last year. It would, if passed, strengthen the safety and quality of care provided by all regulated health professionals in this province. It would provide all health regulatory colleges with the tools they need to support their mandate to protect the public. Colleges would be given the authority to conduct comprehensive inspections of places where health care services are provided.

This amendment was necessitated due to a number of unacceptable situations that arose in 2007. You will recall that there were incidents of substandard cosmetic surgery provided by physicians. The risk to the public's safety made this an urgent priority of our government.

In November 2007, the College of Physicians and Surgeons established a multi-pronged plan for responding to these incidents, including regulating the practice of high-risk procedures such as cosmetic surgery. I'd like to acknowledge and thank our partner, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, for its leadership in this important matter.

Health regulatory colleges need the authority to directly observe regulated health professionals in practice, including directly observing them performing procedures on patients to ensure the quality and safety of facilities and equipment they use and provide in such services. The best time to do so is during an inspection of the place where a regulated health professional practises. This would enhance the ability of the colleges to adequately inspect places where unsafe health care services could be provided.

The McGuinty government is committed to enhancing patient safety and the quality of care provided by health care professionals. That's why we've moved on a number of fronts. In July 2008, an amended regulation of the Public Hospitals Act was enacted to require hospitals to disclose to patients and their families any critical event which resulted in serious injury or death. In September 2008, we started full public hearings on eight patient-safety indicators, including C. difficile, as part of a comprehensive plan to create an unprecedented level of transparency in Ontario's hospitals. This is but the latest in a series of initiatives designed to protect Ontario patients.

I would urge all members of this Legislature to support Bill 141, as we improve public safety in the health care system.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'd just like to comment that it seems unusual that with all the job losses going on around this province, hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs and a huge economic crisis, the first piece of legislation the government sees fit to bring in is one to do with cosmetic surgery. I just question the priorities of this government when we have such a major crisis that is going on in the province of Ontario. We wait for them to take some real action to deal with this economic crisis that the province finds itself in. We wonder when the

government's going to be bringing its budget in and we wonder when this government—when Mr. McGuinty—is going to actually develop a plan to deal with this economic crisis, because so far it seems like he just reacts to things and is governing by polls instead of actually dealing with the crisis that we find ourselves in.

I'm surprised to see that this is the priority for this government and I wonder when they're going to actually deal with the crisis we find ourselves in.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I just wanted to say that I will be supporting this amendment. It's a small amendment. It's typical of what Liberals do on a regular basis; they introduce little regulatory changes and never go the full length of what needs to be done by way of regulation.

Cosmetic surgery has been an issue for quite a long time. There are a whole lot of people who want to be able to have cosmetic surgery, and I find it regrettable, quite frankly, that so many feel that somehow they are not quite as beautiful as they are and they need corrective surgery.

0910

The problem is, it's done by people who shouldn't be doing it. We need strong regulation in order to be able to do it. The scope of observation is tied to the facility rather than the procedural physician. This is a good regulatory practice here. At least it will allow people to go in and observe not just the facility but the practice, and that's going in the right direction. God bless. Hopefully, some lives may be saved in the process.

But we've got to go a little further than that. We've got to do what other provinces are doing—recognizing the importance of extensive monitoring. In some of these provinces, like British Columbia and Alberta, all surgeons and the surgical facilities they operate in must be licensed for each procedure they perform. That's the way it should be.

We do these little regulatory changes that make it very difficult for us not to support. Why wouldn't we be supporting these changes that could lead to better observation and better regulatory changes? But we've got to do much more than that.

We hope the government will bring this package down the line—who knows when?—but that is at least my expectation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Mike Colle:** The importance of this change is essentially that the general public doesn't have the expertise or the time to ensure that regulated health professionals, the people who provide health care services right across this province on a 24/7 basis—that there is a safety mechanism to ensure that these practitioners of health, who have the health and safety of Ontarians in their hands, are supervised by their supervisory bodies, the regulatory bodies, to make sure they're doing the right thing and that if there are improper undertakings

there is a mechanism to ensure they are checked and the public is protected.

This is not a stand-alone piece of regulatory change. It goes along with all the regulatory changes and all the changes in the health care system that we've undertaken. This is one piece of it. It's something that professionals in the field and safety advocates have said is needed. The public asks government to protect them.

It's always after the fact, when an unfortunate situation occurs, that people then come clamouring and saying, "Why wasn't that changed?" So the government has responded to these health professionals who are saying, "This is something we could use to ensure the public is safeguarded," that there are mechanisms in place to ensure that these practitioners are doing things according to the best rules and best practice available. That's what this change is about. It is something that protects the public, and the public expects government to do, because the public needs to work in partnership with the government to ensure that their health and safety is protected.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I see, after our nice little holiday, not much has changed. The government priority is still right where it was where we left off. Here we are, facing such huge economic challenges, and here is the government priority once again.

I just have to comment on what we've heard recently in the papers from our esteemed Premier. He mentioned a couple of weeks ago, during his parade of interviews, that Ontario has half a million provincial laws and regulations and that this was choking off prosperity in this province—half a million. I guess today it's going to be half a million and one. They're just going to be increasing, increasing.

Now of course, the Premier said his job was going to be to reduce and eliminate these unproductive, counter-productive pieces of regulations—and Bill 141 comes in. We've heard the Premier, on many occasions, talk about promises. A couple of weeks ago, we heard promises that we were going to reduce regulatory burdens. What do we get the first day back? He hasn't even gotten in the House yet and the promises are being broken.

This Bill 141—surely everybody on the Liberal side of this House understands that we do have some priorities and we do have responsibilities to the people of this province, and it's not to be chasing our tails all the time over insignificant, incremental regulatory creep.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Scarborough-Rouge River has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** I just want to thank the members from Parry Sound-Muskoka, Trinity-Spadina, Eglinton-Lawrence and Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington for their comments.

What took place in 2007, where we had patient safety situations occur, was really unfortunate. The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario approached the government as a result of those incidents, requiring that we



do something to assist them in the regulations process. That's what we're doing today. The government is responding to the college. We're responding as quickly as we can to strengthen the regulatory process within the college for patient safety. I would urge all members to support this bill. Let it have easy passage quickly into legislation. We look after patient safety, which is the number one priority of the government.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I move adjournment of the debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading debate adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Orders of the day?

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** There's no more business this morning.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The government having no more business this morning, the House is therefore recessed until 10:30 this morning.

*The House recessed from 0918 to 1030.*

#### USE OF PAPER IN THE HOUSE

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Good morning, members. Welcome back as we begin this new session. I have a brief statement I'd like to deliver.

Since becoming Speaker, I've heard from quite a few members about the number of paper documents that each of us receives every day. In this electronic age, many members and their staffs are quite comfortable using their computers to get information and do not need hard copies.

Of course, I have no jurisdiction over the reports and other documents sent to you by various ministries or by agencies, boards and commissions of the government, and from a range of other sources. The documents of the Legislative Assembly, however, are within my jurisdiction. Therefore, in response to concerns by many members and in the interest of further reducing the assembly's environmental footprint and more wisely using resources, I've taken steps to reduce the amount of paper documents distributed each day the House meets.

Up to now, all members have had a set of binders under their desks. Each day, the Hansard and copies of bills have been inserted. I have had all these binders removed and have arranged for copies of all bills and Hansards to be made available on demand by simply requesting them from the table. This step alone will significantly reduce the amount of paper consumed by this assembly without affecting access to the documents, which are also available on the assembly website. In fact, they are routinely available there long before the printed versions are delivered. However, should you personally wish to retain hard copies of bills and Hansards at your desk, please mention this to the table and this will be done for you.

It seems to me that more than ever it is incumbent on us to be careful stewards of our resources and our bud-

gets. Every bit of printed material we can cut out of our daily lives will lessen the environmental footprint of the assembly and make a difference in many ways.

I wish to thank members for their comments to me about this issue and for your ongoing support for other environmental programs already under way here at the assembly. I look forward to your co-operation in this initiative and invite your ideas on ways that we can do even more in the future. Thank you.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I seek unanimous consent for the Speaker to be given an opportunity to comment on the recent Blizzard column which spoke of him in the superlative.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member seeks unanimous consent. I'm afraid I heard a no.

#### PREMIER'S ATTENDANCE

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** On a point of order, Speaker: With the exception of the York University legislation, this House hasn't been in session since December 11. Last month we saw 70,000 jobs lost in Ontario. Can we not expect the Premier to be here for question period?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The Minister of Finance on the same point of order.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The Premier is with the Prime Minister about to launch a major infrastructure initiative that will create a number of jobs in Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** It's time for oral questions. The leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition.

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

##### ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** Thank you, Speaker. In that event, my question will have to go to the Minister of Finance.

Minister, in the last few weeks, Mr. McGuinty has been all over the map in terms of how your government will meet the province's financial challenges. You even had to be sent out to calm the waters after he suggested bringing back Rae days for the public service. Now we're told that you are delaying your budget past the dates you suggested it was going to be tabled. Minister, is this just another indication that your leader, Mr. McGuinty, is out of his depth, that his erratic behaviour is paralyzing this government?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Our government, after the election, laid out a plan that began to address what was already occurring in the economy in terms of challenges to the manufacturing and forestry sectors. We built on that in our March 2008 budget, creating more than 1.5% of GDP in stimulus through infrastructure and tax cuts. We updated that in our fall economic statement. Subsequent to that, we've provided up to \$1.4 billion in assist-



ance to the automotive sector, which hopefully will see resolution soon.

There are enormous challenges that have emerged in the economy, particularly since October, and I think it's quite fair and appropriate that the Premier of Ontario take in a range of views and look carefully at all kinds of alternatives to help Ontario weather this global economic crisis.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** The behaviour of Mr. McGuinty is certainly raising eyebrows. He has more positions than a Kama Sutra enthusiast. People in this province—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Order.

Please continue.

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** People in this province should have confidence in the guy steering the ship. But when one day he says his five-point economic plan is the greatest thing since sliced bread and a few weeks later he suggests it's virtually irrelevant; when he says in October that we need an emergency debate on the economy and four months later it's just sitting on the order paper not being debated, not being voted on, I think the Premier's musings generate legitimate concerns. This is not just an economic crisis; it's becoming a crisis of leadership. Why are you delaying the budget?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We certainly don't want to make light of the circumstances at this time, particularly today when the state of California is on the verge of bankruptcy; when we will hear back, in the US, on the automotive sector. What I can say is this: When we proposed \$4.9 billion in infrastructure investment, that member voted against it. I will remind you, sir, that \$7 billion in infrastructure investment is in the ground, under way in Ontario as a result of this government's budget. When we proposed significant tax relief that flowed to companies last July to help those sectors that were most challenged, those companies both making money and not making money, that member and his party voted against it.

This is no time for jokes. We are in the midst of a global crisis. It's affecting every country in the world. We've laid out a plan. We've shown leadership—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Final supplementary?

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** Well, 70,000 Ontario jobs lost last month; 136,000 lost since November; bankruptcies up 50%. The minister says he doesn't want to make light of the situation. Well, what are we debating in the Legislature this week? Cosmetic surgery? Young offender housing? Does that suggest a government and a Premier who know what they're doing? I say no. This is a government adrift, with a Premier unable to provide leadership in these challenging times. I ask the minister, will he commit to bringing in a budget no later than the first week of March, as he promised earlier, a budget that will include a comprehensive and realistic economic plan?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We laid out a comprehensive plan in March of 2008. We updated it in the fall of 2008. I'll remind you that when his party was out talking about balanced budgets for the next four years, this government, this Premier, were the first to acknowledge the enormous challenge in the world economy being faced right here in Ontario.

There is much to do. We will table a budget in the last two weeks of March. We are preparing for every circumstance. Today that party put out their fourth plan in five months that says nothing, does nothing—

**Hon. George Smitherman:** Talk about erratic.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** —and talk about erratic.

Premier McGuinty and his government will continue to build on the initiatives we've laid out in the last year and a half to help Ontario through this global crisis.

1040

## ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** In the absence of the Premier, to the Minister of Finance—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd just remind the honourable member that we don't make reference to the attendance of members.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** As you'll recall, the Premier wanted the finance committee to hold pre-budget consultations, for the first time in memory, before Christmas. Particularly in a time of growing economic crisis, a government that completed its pre-budget hearings more than two months ago should be ready with a budget and a plan today.

The federal government unveiled its budget almost a month ago. You would think the Ontario government would follow suit. Instead, Premier McGuinty seems absolutely paralyzed by indecision.

Why did you jam the pre-budget consultations in the week before Christmas if you had no intention to act now?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The member voted against having travelling pre-budget consultations. They've now laid out four plans in five months with respect to the economy.

Our members and I have conducted hundreds of sessions around the province. We have met with business leaders, labour leaders. We have met with a variety of sources both inside Ontario and outside of Ontario.

The member is right, the federal government did have a federal budget—absolutely. That was after a rather dismal fall statement, I might add. I don't think I'd want to do what happened up there.

We laid out a fall statement that updated and invested more in infrastructure. We will lay out a budget in the last two weeks of March that builds on those initiatives, recognizing the enormous challenge in the global economy today. Ontario will not only deal with the short term, we'll deal with long-term competitiveness in a way that member and his party aren't prepared to do.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary.



**Mr. Tim Hudak:** The minister says that they talked to everybody and his brother—I guess as long as they don't stand anywhere near five feet of the Premier.

I say to the minister, it is time for action. It's awfully difficult for working families and businesses to know where the Premier is coming from these days. They worry about paying their mortgages, they worry about keeping their jobs, and they see no leadership in the Premier's office. One day he sounds like the ghost of Bob Rae, musing about a return to Rae days; the next he talks about cutting taxes and rolling back red tape to spur job creation, just like John Tory and the PC caucus have been calling for for some time; then he sounds like a New Age guru talking about something called "the creative economy" that he happened to read about the night before.

Minister, at this time of economic crisis, Ontario needs a strong leader in the Premier's office. Enough of his musings: It's time for action. Will your government call an early budget to finally spur job creation in the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The people of Ontario put a strong leader into the Premier's office in October 2007. They rejected a blind, right-wing ideology that would sacrifice the public interest to the private interest, and instead accepted a Premier and a government that has a plan and has laid out a plan over the last year that builds on infrastructure, builds on tax relief in targeted ways to help stimulate our economy through what all acknowledge is the most challenging global crisis we have seen in generations.

There are no easy or glib answers, like the member opposite would have you believe. These are tough, difficult times. We have laid out a plan that has seen us this far. There is more to do. There's nobody better suited to lead this province than Dalton McGuinty and his government as we go through these difficult and challenging times.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Minister, give me a break. You say there are no easy answers. Your Premier has no answers whatsoever. I believe, quite frankly, that the Premier has no clue whatsoever what to do about the growing economic crisis in this province. I hope, at the very least, that Dalton McGuinty finally understands that the same kind of outdated tax-and-spend policies that got us into this mess sure the heck aren't going to get us out of this mess.

Minister, on January 30 you said no to a harmonized sales tax, and just seven days later the Premier wants to give it a good, hard look. You wonder who's running the ship. Seventy thousand well-paying jobs have been lost in the meantime.

Minister, and to your Premier, let's end this policy paralysis and act before more jobs are lost. Bring forward that budget, and bring it forward immediately.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We will bring the budget forward in the last two weeks of March, and, unlike the

member opposite, we'll bring it forward right here in the Legislature. And unlike the member and his party opposite, it will give a complete and true picture of the province's accounts.

These are difficult, enormously challenging times for every economy in the world. We saw the G7 meeting this weekend; we saw the enormous difficulties there. The plan we laid out last year, which invested \$7 billion in the ground in infrastructure this year, that member voted against. The \$1.5 billion in tax cuts that have flowed already out of \$3 billion approved, that member and his party voted against. He voted against having travelling public hearings on finance; we didn't.

Sir, there's more to do. We'll lay out a budget towards the end of March that deals with yet again and continues to build on the progress we have made—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** My question is to the Minister of Economic Development. The newspapers are labelling it "D-Day in Detroit" as General Motors and Chrysler prepare to meet the deadline the American government has imposed for auto sector restructuring. Here in Ontario, General Motors workers are wondering if any of their jobs are secure. The CAW leadership has suggested General Motors might leave the province altogether.

My question is this: Can the McGuinty government assure workers and communities that General Motors will continue to substantially operate in Ontario?

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** Well, this government is working very hard to make sure that is in fact the case. There have been discussions underway for months now between management and labour and government—United States, federal and provincial—in order to determine whether or not there is a viable plan in which it is in the taxpayers' interest to invest. The portion of our economy that involves auto manufacturing, parts and supplies, and distribution, not to mention the full supply chain, literally involves about half a million jobs. It is of such economic importance that the government is certainly doing everything it can to assure those workers and to assure the people of the many communities that are involved that we do have a healthy auto industry into the future.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I'm not sure, if people in Oshawa or Windsor or St. Catharines were listening, that they would find any comfort in this minister's answer whatsoever.

Here is the reality: Tens of thousands of good jobs are at stake, and the McGuinty government's response all along has been, "Let it all be decided in Washington." Well, if it's all decided in Washington, what can happen is what the CAW leadership are already concerned about: that General Motors will simply close up shop here in



Ontario and tens of thousands of jobs, good jobs, will disappear. I want to ask the minister very specifically, what concrete steps has the McGuinty government taken to prevent this from happening?

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** Let's start with the fact that this government had an auto strategy that leveraged literally billions of dollars of investment and created thousands of jobs, and that member and that party voted against it. Fast-forward to the future, when in fact the government of Ontario and the Premier in particular were out front ahead of any leader indicating the need for government to provide assistance and provide jump-starts to the industry so that we can sustain an auto industry in the province of Ontario. That member was against it. One day the member is standing up, as he is today, for the Canadian Auto Workers, and the next day he doesn't have a nice thing to say about their leadership.

We will continue to work with the leadership of the CAW, with management and with other governments to ensure that we continue to have a vibrant auto industry in the province of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I asked for concrete steps and what I got was another barrage of the McGuinty government's failure. Maybe this minister didn't notice, but while you and the Premier were boasting about your auto plan, the truck plant in Oshawa closed and thousands of workers went out the door. While you and the Premier were boasting, the transmission plant in Windsor closed and thousands of workers went out the door, and thousands of other workers who were suppliers to those plants went out the door.

1050

We believe we need to have a thoughtful strategy for helping the auto sector, and waiting for all the decisions to be made in Washington is not it. We need an auto plan with product guarantees and job guarantees, and we need some specifics from the McGuinty government. What is the McGuinty government's plan, other than more blah, blah, blah?

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** Jobs, jobs, jobs is what has been created as a result of the investments. That's what's created, and as a result of the investments made by this government, we're going to try and sustain those jobs.

This is a member who would like, on one occasion, to oppose the investments in the auto industry and then, on the next occasion, stand up and change his mind. Then, when the Premier of Ontario is the first leader to stand up and say that assistance needs to be provided for the auto industry, this member is against it. Today, of course, he's in favour of it.

Concrete is investments—it leverages billions of dollars and more investments. It has created and retained jobs. Our goal is to continue to create jobs in the long term, to retain the jobs during this unprecedented contraction and to manage this issue as the Premier has, with leadership ahead of the other leaders into the future so that we can have that vibrant auto industry, which—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** To the Minister of Economic Development for the McGuinty government: What planet is the McGuinty government on? Manufacturing jobs are leaving Ontario at a faster rate than ever before. If you compare the manufacturing job loss in Ontario with what's happening in the United States on a per capita basis, it is far worse here in Ontario.

I want to quote Dave Cole, the head of the auto sector think tank—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. Please stand and withdraw.

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** I withdraw. Thank you.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Obviously, the McGuinty government doesn't want to hear about their sorry record in the loss of manufacturing jobs. I quote Dave Cole from the Center for Automotive Research: "Both Chrysler and GM are going to try to show a pretty comprehensive plan going forward that will put the company in the size that it needs to be to compete over the long term, and that could put some Canadian facilities at risk beyond what was already announced...."

I ask again: What's the McGuinty government done to ensure this doesn't happen?

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** Firstly, the member is wrong, and he knows that he's wrong, when he says that in fact what is taking place in Canada is somehow worse than what is taking place in the United States. That is complete nonsense. In fact, right now as we speak, the financial sector has been ranked number one by a number of—including the world economic council. We have a situation right now that, thanks to the investments made by this government in advance of the recession—not in the belly of the recession, as this member suddenly found interest in these investments, but in advance of the recession—to create literally thousands and thousands of jobs and leverage billions of dollars of investment. This government has been providing those jump-starts to allow those companies to be in the position that they are in today. That's why the CAW leadership has said from day one, for the last five years, that without this government's support, GM and Chrysler would be in a far, far, far worse position.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** The McGuinty government would have us believe that General Motors closing their truck plant in Oshawa and putting thousands of workers on the street is somehow good news, that General Motors closing the transmission plant in Windsor and putting thousands of auto workers on the street is somehow good news. I've got news for the McGuinty government: This is not achievement that anybody would boast about.

But I want to ask again about something that is happening here and now. Our tool suppliers and mould-



makers are warning that they stand to lose as much as \$1.5 billion worth of business, and these losses will translate into the loss of tens of thousands of more good jobs.

Again, I ask the McGuinty government: We know your sorry record over the last couple of years. What concrete steps are you taking now to ensure this doesn't happen? Or is it simply more blah, blah, blah?

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** I'm reminded of the member's complete lack of support when in fact the investments were made in the auto sector. I'm also reminded of what the member said of the CAW leadership whom he pretends to support today. He said, "We could blow our brains out trying to talk to these guys. It's not worth it." That was the member's approach to the CAW then; today it's very different.

The member has acknowledged the billions of dollars of investments that have been made by this government on behalf of taxpayers to leverage billions more, to create jobs, to retain jobs.

What are we doing? We stepped forward first to work with management and labour to put together a system that will allow these companies to transform, while at the same time trying to avoid the enormous chaos that would result in the event that the government did not step forward. That has meant that the government is in a position to provide—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Final supplementary?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Again, I want to set the record straight. What the McGuinty government said was that you were going to wait for Washington to work it out. In fact, this minister went to Washington and couldn't even get anybody to meet with him. It was like a comedy sideshow.

Here is the reality: If General Motors makes major cuts in assembly operations, it will cause a disastrous domino effect. We simply can't allow that to happen. We need a made-in-Ontario, made-for-Ontario, auto plan now that includes product guarantees and job guarantees, and I can tell the minister that tens of thousands of workers and dozens of communities are wondering where it is.

What's it going to be? More recitation of things that haven't worked, by the McGuinty government? Or are we going to see an auto plan that is made in Ontario, for Ontario, and are we going to see it now?

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** I know the member is aware that this government has had an auto plan in place for the last five years. I know the member is aware that the Premier was the first leader of any national or sub-national jurisdiction to stand up and say that obviously the government is going to need to step forward and provide assistance. We were in fact there and working with the auto industry even before any of that was taking place in Washington, DC.

As a result of that and as a result of the relationship that has been established between labour leadership, management leadership and this government, we are on a footing that will allow us—in the event that a viable plan

is put in place that will allow us to make those investments to assist the industry—to continue to have a viable auto industry in the province of Ontario, something that the New Democrats have been against for the last five years.

## ONTARIO LOTTERY AND GAMING CORP.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** To the Minister of Infrastructure: The Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. has been allowed to preside over the defrauding of Ontario consumers to the tune of some \$200 million, and this government has done nothing.

Since André Marin's report confirming that there was widespread fraud in Ontario's lottery system, we have heard nothing from Dalton McGuinty, we have heard nothing from the minister responsible for the OLG: no firings, no resignations, no direction for further criminal investigations.

I'd like to ask the minister this: After years of the opposition calling for an investigation, for a committee of the Legislature to look into the scandal at the OLG, why have we not heard from the minister responsible, and what steps is the minister going to take to restore confidence in Ontario's lottery system?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** I think that the matter at hand is one that bears some illumination because the honourable member, I think, has misinterpreted a few things.

Firstly, the report that the honourable member quotes is a report that the lottery corporation itself commissioned, and it goes back 13 years.

Secondly, in the senior leadership roles at the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp., eight of the 10 senior managers are new, which does speak to a cleaning house with respect to the leadership that's provided there.

On the matter most recently in the news, I did have the opportunity to address this subject with the media in a scrum in Niagara Falls, where I clearly stated the necessity of continuing to move forward with initiatives that make these games more reliable and safer for consumers. The consumer has an important role to play in signing their tickets. By way of supplementary, I'll be addressing other helpful steps.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?  
1100

**Mr. Frank Klees:** So what we hear from the minister is that cleaning house simply means that you allow people whose fingers were all over the corruption in this crown agency are simply allowed to leave. My question to the minister is, who is he holding responsible? Who is being held accountable? What are the consequences of this fraudulent activity taking place in a multi-billion dollar crown agency? Is that this government's idea of holding people accountable, just simply hiding behind the Ombudsman of this province?

He, as minister responsible for this crown agency, should take responsibility and, by holding people ac-



countable, demonstrate to the people of this province that they can have confidence. Will he agree to do that?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** We should hold him accountable because he was part of a government that the Deloitte report indicated was there while these practices were ongoing.

So what has happened? The Ombudsman, among others, has called questionable practices into account. Accordingly, the leadership—new leadership—at the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. has moved forward to hire Deloitte to take a look, 13 years retrospectively, at the work that has gone on there. They've taken those findings and they have provided those to the Ontario Provincial Police so that if they do see a pattern there that warrants moving forward in a criminal context, then that vehicle is available.

The honourable member asks what has been done. Reports have been issued; Deloitte has been hired, and they're looking back 13 years. We're going to continue to get to the bottom of the matter through these sorts of examinations. He wants to know, what is the price that's been paid? Who has been held accountable? Eight of 10—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question?

### MANUFACTURING JOBS

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is to the Minister of Economic Development. Minister, January's jobs numbers from Stats Canada show a collapsing job market, with 71,000 jobs lost in November, 36,000 of those in the manufacturing sector alone. Unless the Ontario government takes bold action now, hundreds of thousands more Ontarians will lose their jobs in the coming months—action like the Buy Ontario program, which would require 50% of the value of all transit equipment purchased in Ontario to be manufactured in Ontario. Will this minister include an aggressive Buy Ontario plan in the coming March budget or is he going to continue to sit on his hands and let Ontario's economy collapse?

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** I'm sure the member is aware of the facts, which involve for example the Move Ontario 2020 plan that will bring, it is estimated, 150,000 jobs to the province of Ontario.

I don't know if the member is standing up and advocating for protectionism; if he is, I disagree with him. The government's approach has been primarily to invest directly in businesses and obviously, in turn, in businesses and workers. We jump in. We assist those companies to jump-start them so that they can jump ahead of their competitors during the time in which the consolidation battles are taking place around the world. By doing that, just in the last year through the Next Generation of Jobs Fund, we have leveraged almost \$1.5 billion of investments and retained or created thousands of jobs. That is this government's strategy: to invest in this success and innovation so as to create more jobs.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I for one can't wait until 2020. On Friday, Stats Canada reported that Ontario manufacturing sales declined 9.2% to \$20.3 billion. This was the largest decline in Ontario's manufacturing history. Nothing short of a massive provincial stimulus program will prevent Ontario's economic recession from snowballing into something much, much worse. The NDP's five-point job plan detailed exactly what should be done.

Will the March budget include a job stimulus plan containing an aggressive Buy Ontario and a massive infrastructure program, or are hundreds of thousands more jobs going to disappear before this government takes action?

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** As I said before, this government created what this member would call stimulus programs. This government has been injecting massive stimulus, massive investments in businesses, and we didn't wait until a recession to do so. In fact, these investments were made before the recession took place. As a result of that, there have been literally, in the last year, over \$1.5 billion of growth and investment by these companies and the retention or creation of literally thousands of jobs. It's thanks to the innovation and ingenuity of these businesses, partnering with the government of Ontario, that in fact we do find there are opportunities—opportunities that, for these companies, are success stories in a time of enormous turbulence and enormous grim news, I recognize, but they are success stories nonetheless.

### STUDENT ASSISTANCE

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Minister, for 12 weeks, approximately 50,000 students at York University were shut out of classes due to a labour dispute. Many students and families in my community were affected by the strike, and I heard from many of my constituents who were frustrated and angry that the two sides could not come to an agreement.

Students returned to the classroom February 2, and since then have been busy catching up on their reading and assignments. Similar to the previous strike at York, the semester has been extended by four weeks in order to make up for lost time. This is good news for the students, who are eager to finish their courses without compromising the academic integrity of their studies, but it poses challenges for students who are now incurring additional costs.

Minister, the government is coming forward to extend payments to students receiving financial aid. Could you please elaborate on the action being taken?

**Hon. John Milloy:** I thank the honourable member for her question, and I think all members are pleased to know that students returned to York University to resume their classes on Monday, February 2.

As the honourable member mentioned in her question to me, the semester has been extended by the university until June 2 so that students are able to complete the re-



quired curriculum for their courses. Certainly the government recognizes that for many students there will be an increased financial burden in this extension. That's why the government will be extending payments to students receiving aid through OSAP to cover additional expenses for the longer study period. We estimate that about 13,000 York students will benefit from this OSAP extension. About 5,300 of these students will not be required to repay this assistance, as they will qualify for an Ontario student opportunity grant.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** Thank you, Minister. York will be extending the semester so that all students will be able to finish their year, but this means an additional four weeks of study time. For many students, this, as you mentioned yourself, is a large burden. They will have to pay for extra living expenses, and this limits the amount of time they have to work in the summer to pay for next year's tuition.

Recently, York announced that students are able to drop a fall course or a full-year course and transfer those tuition fees to upcoming courses. This is something the student body was urging the university to do to help compensate students, and I am pleased to see that they were successful in getting it, but this is only one piece of the puzzle for the York students. Minister, what else can be done to help lessen the burden for students during that four-week extension?

**Hon. John Milloy:** As I mentioned, the government will be extending OSAP for eligible students, similar to what happened during the strike in 2000-01. I also would like to point out to the member that York University recently announced a \$5-million bursary fund, which is available to those students who will need help due to the extension of the academic year. Students can also apply to the fund next year if they need additional financial assistance due to the shortened summer work period. Students will be allowed to drop a course and transfer those tuition fees to next year, as the honourable member mentioned. Also, York will be extending housing in residence at no extra cost. Finally, the federal government also announced that they would be extending the Canada student loan for eligible students.

There's no doubt that the strike at York has been difficult for all students, but I'm confident that, with this package of financial aid, students will be able to complete their studies.

## HEALTH CARE

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** My question is for the Minister of Health. Last year, on April 11, 2008, Mr. McGuinty promised, "I will not cut public services that Ontarians count on," yet every day we hear about that promise being broken as we learn of nurses being fired, hospital beds being closed, and ERs being turned into urgent care centres.

As you know, Minister, hospitals are in the midst of preparing for 2009-10. Mr. McGuinty told them they

could expect an increase in operating funds of 2.1%. Will you confirm that hospitals will receive at least 2.1% in operating funding, despite the fact that costs are over 3%?

1110

**Hon. David Caplan:** I think it's important to put a couple of facts on the table. We've seen hospital funding increase almost one third. Over the course of the last five years, that's over 7.5% per year, in fact, in support of our hospitals. That's double, and in some cases triple, the rate of inflation.

I would point out as well, as my colleague the finance minister does, that this member voted against those funding increases for our hospitals. In fact, the member highlights on a go-forward basis—and I have indicated to our hospital partners that they should plan and that they should do their work on the basis of the budget outlook, which they have previously been provided.

Of course, it will be up to the finance minister, when he unveils the budget here in the House, to confirm in-year. I'm not in a position to be able to specifically identify what will be in the budget for the coming year, as the member well knows. But I know that, for example—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I'm shocked to hear the Minister of Health is not prepared to make a commitment to the hospitals. The reality is you have no plan for health care—you have never had a plan—and on a daily basis, whether it's the hospitals' long-term-care doctors or nurses, everybody is in suspended animation wondering what you're going to do now that your revenues are lower than you had anticipated in the days when you could merrily spend, spend, spend.

I say to you today, are you going to further jeopardize the health care system and cut more nurses—you've already now cut the hiring of the 9,000; you've postponed the hiring of the family health teams. Are you further going to jeopardize core health services?

**Hon. David Caplan:** I think it's important to remember that this member, when she was on this side of the House—she was a member of the government—cut 6,000 nursing positions. My colleagues in the third party cut 3,000.

The record of this government is quite different. So far, we've had over 10,000 nurses hired in the province of Ontario. When it comes to a commitment toward putting health resources into play, I'll compare the record of this government and this party to that member's any day of the week.

But in fact, it gets better. The avowed position of this member and her party is a further \$3-billion cut to health care services with the elimination of the Ontario health premium. I reject that approach; Ontarians reject that approach. We need enhanced support, which we have seen, in our hospitals; we need enhanced resources and personnel on the front lines, as we have committed to and as we are providing. The premise of the—



**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question?

### ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

**Mr. Michael Prue:** My question is to the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Last November, I was asked to hand-deliver some 300 personal letters to Minister Matthews. They are part of a campaign called Disability Should Not Be a Poverty Life Sentence. To refresh her memory, I can quote a small segment of one letter from a Hamilton woman named Ann: "I am asking that ODSP rates be raised ... so that a single person may receive roughly the same amount as a senior living on OAS, and that the rates be fixed to inflation."

Why have the minister and her office not seen fit to answer even one of these 300 letters?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Of course I am committed to ensuring that people with disabilities have the ability to fully participate in the economic fabric of our communities. That's why we've made significant changes to ODSP, so that people on ODSP who are capable of earning at least some income now keep much more of what they're able to earn than they were under the previous government.

We've made other changes to ODSP that are all about encouraging them to be in employment and to participate in our community. We will continue to make those changes. We are very committed to reducing poverty for all Ontarians, and people with disabilities are very much part of that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I listened to the minister and not once did she say that she or her office even attempted to answer these 300 letters. It saddens me to think that for three months, this government cannot be bothered to respond to 300 Ontarians with disabilities who took the time to write.

As one of those writers from Richmond Hill wrote, "People with disabilities require sufficient income to live with respect and dignity—the current ODSP affords neither." Why does this government continue to keep our disabled community far below the poverty line, and more importantly, why won't these letters be answered?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I will certainly investigate to see why those letters have not been answered. Certainly it is our practice in my office to answer our correspondence in a timely way, so I do undertake to look into that. I would very much like to refer this answer, though, to the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** New question.

### TEACHERS' COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** My question is for the Minister of Education. Parents around the province, and especially in our western Mississauga communities of Streetsville, Meadowvale, Lisgar and Churchill Meadows, were

relieved to hear the news that the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario and the Ontario Public School Boards' Association have decided to put students first and have accepted the ministry's final offer. As I understand it, the new \$700-million investment means fair salary increases, more preparation time, smaller class sizes, more grades 4 to 8 teachers, more time to do report cards, improved working conditions for occasional teachers and guaranteed enhancement to benefits. But some of my constituents have asked why it took so long to reach this agreement. What can the minister say to the parents who waited for this agreement to happen?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** First of all, I'd like to say how pleased we are that ETFO and OPSBA have decided to accept this agreement and now can go to the local tables and begin to finalize those local agreements. Both parties deserve high praise for doing that.

We acted to head off potential province-wide labour disruption during a time of economic downturn. As you know, the conversation at the provincial level between ETFO and OPSBA broke down in December. The local discussions were not going smoothly. What was really important for me was that kids in our classrooms wouldn't have to deal with disruption because the adults couldn't come to an agreement. That's why we stepped in. We put a revised offer on the table and we were able to have both parties come to that agreement.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** A province-wide strike would have led to great hardship for parents who struggle to care for their kids in these very uncertain economic times. I was thinking about the threat of teachers' strikes the other day as I read an editorial in Saturday's Toronto Star. The editorial stated that Ontario presided over "a badly flawed, two-tier bargaining structure that makes it hard to negotiate meaningful trade-offs...."

"School boards are legally responsible for signing final contracts with their teachers' unions but—lacking tax powers—they don't have a large say in money issues dealt with at the" bargaining "table. That can make local bargaining exceedingly difficult ... the system would likely work better with Ontario-wide bargaining on all issues."

Minister, is our education labour process "badly flawed"?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** First of all, I'd like to say that I am very proud of the relationships that this government has built with employee groups in the education sector. It's been a very strong relationship and because of that, more than a year ago, we were able to put in place a systematic process that, albeit informal, allowed every employee group and every employer in the education sector to come together and to work out a provincial framework. There was one of those conversations that didn't succeed but every other provincial framework was in place within the time period allotted.

There is no perfect bargaining process. What we are doing is building on processes that began when the party opposite changed the rules around provincial funding. So



what we've been doing is working at the provincial level, I believe, in the role of local school boards. I don't think that decisions can be made holus-bolus—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

### HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** My question is for the Minister of Health. Minister, as you will know, recently the Erie St. Clair LHIN in my riding of Sarnia-Lambton initiated a review of the emergency departments in its LHIN. This report was made public a few weeks ago, and the community of Petrolia in Sarnia-Lambton was shocked to learn that these consultants, after spending less than two whole hours in Petrolia, have recommended the downgrading of the emergency department of CEE hospital in Petrolia to an urgent care ward. They have recommended this despite overwhelming evidence that the emergency department at the CEE hospital is an important part of the delivery of rural health care services in Lambton county.

1120

Minister, do you agree with taking away the emergency room designation at CEE hospital?

**Hon. David Caplan:** I think it's important to remember that local health integration networks are tasked with local health planning, and that's why they commissioned the Hay Group to look at all of the hospitals and what they should be able to do to find ways to make the system work better for the community that it serves.

I know for example that, as the member mentions, the report was put out for a period of consultation to be able to talk to community residents. This is rather unique to members of the Conservative Party, who issued no consultation and did no work with local communities when it came to configuring and changing the health care system.

I was really encouraged when Chatham-Kent mayor Randy Hope said, "We need to remember that all we have so far is a consultant's report. No decision has been taken by the health integration network. We have agreed that the best way forward is to get all parties together and hold an informed discussion. That's exactly what we're"—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Minister, the LHIN that was appointed by your government has caused a health care crisis in central Lambton county, and I would urge the members of the government party that coming soon to a LHIN near you is a study that will affect your rural hospitals. No one in my community trusts the LHIN to make a fair and honest decision about CEE hospital.

Recently, six doctors in Petrolia have said they will resign their hospital privileges as of June 30 if they don't have a positive response, unless the LHIN agrees to keep the emergency department open. Minister, will you assure the people of central Lambton county that CEE hospital will be able to keep its emergency room

designation and not put health care in central Lambton in—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. David Caplan:** I think it's important to remember the fact that this is out for consultation, that they are in the midst of it. I don't think it's incumbent to presuppose what the results of those discussions are going to be. I can tell you that it is, in my feeling, incumbent on all elected officials, community leaders and partners in our health care system to focus on how best to engage the public during the process.

I think it's important to point out to the member that our government has in fact supported, and will continue to support, the Bluewater Health system. Base funding, for example, for Bluewater Health has increased by \$15 million since 2003. That's an almost 16% increase. Should the member and his colleagues be able to make the kinds of changes to cut health care by \$3 billion in the province of Ontario, I shudder to think what effect that would have, not only on Bluewater—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

### MINISTRY OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** My question is to the Attorney General. Where was the Attorney General while high-priced Bay Street law firms were running up a \$23.4-million tab in order to win a \$3.5-million lawsuit?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Well, for the first several years I was still practising law in London, Ontario.

The fact of the matter is, that case cost too much and the government can do better, so we've already taken steps.

We started by reforming the civil justice system. Beginning January 1, 2010, there will be streamlined procedures for all types of cases, making justice more accessible and more affordable.

Secondly, where we do need to retain lawyers, we're doing it less with outside counsel; we're twinning our own counsel with any outside counsel that we retain; and there is a capping of fees wherever possible.

We've already taken the steps to deal with those issues.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** This has been a notorious lawsuit that's been written about and reported on in all the major media. The fact is that for the last five years it has been this government in charge of the office down on Bay Street, the Ministry of the Attorney General. It has been during their watch that there has been a total absence of oversight, of case management, of monitoring. Either the ministry and the minister were asleep at the switch, or he was simply all too comfortable letting his Bay Street friends bill at 850 bucks an hour.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** The reason we took the case back in-house from the private counsel was to make



sure that we could most effectively manage the costs, and we're taking those steps more frequently with cases than we ever did in the past.

There is a proceeding before the courts at the moment to recover the costs from the unsuccessful party in the litigation. So we are taking steps to recover the costs.

For future cases, I say to all that we retain outside lawyers less frequently; that where we do, we twin them with our own; and that where we have to retain outside counsel, we're taking whatever steps we can—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** —to make sure that the case that started under the Tories—and thanks for the heckle—doesn't get out of control as it did.

### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I've got a question today for the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure.

Minister, Ontario is facing some really tough economic challenges, and it's really important that every public dollar we spend is spent wisely and that it helps Ontario's families. Investments in public transit, especially, are very important. They're an important way to help stimulate the economy, they help the environment, and they help build the infrastructure that Ontario needs for the 21st century.

I understand the Premier and the Prime Minister made a very important announcement this morning in Etobicoke-Lakeshore. Minister, can you please let the House know what this announcement was?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** We heard people making some reference earlier today to the Premier, and I was very, very pleased to be able to tell members of the House that the Premier and the Prime Minister were participating today in an important capital infrastructure investment this time related to GO Transit.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. George Smitherman:** It builds, I say to the honourable member from Renfrew, on last week's announcement between the government of Canada and the government of Ontario, which saw us collectively investing \$671 million in 289 projects, leveraging total investments of \$1 billion. Today's announcement is to enhance the capability of the GO Transit system, with investment from both levels of government totalling about half a billion dollars and creating 5,000 jobs.

To quote the Premier, "More efficient, reliable, and sustainable commuter transit will also help the greater Toronto area attract and keep the jobs of the future."

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** That's certainly wonderful news for the people of Oakville. It's the sort of investment that Ontario needs, and it's going to strengthen our economy. It's also only part of the overall plan that we have to expand public transit in the greater Golden Horseshoe area.

Minister, while Ontario needs these investments in public transit, it's also important for us to invest further

in other infrastructure and build Ontario's economic backbone, as well. It's going to help us emerge from this difficult economic situation as an even stronger province.

Minister, can you tell us your other plans for how you're going to continue to invest in Ontario's important public infrastructure?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** The Minister of Transportation will add further illumination today.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** As part of the \$500-million announcement that was made by the Prime Minister and Premier today, we will know that we have thousands upon thousands of jobs which are going to be created as a result of this in Ajax, Aurora, Mount Pleasant, Bramalea, Centennial, Unionville, Cooksville, Erindale, Oakville, Markham, Pickering and Rouge Hill. In addition to that, the Hamilton Junction project, which is a \$75.5-million rail-to-rail grade separation project, will increase the reliability and improve GO train service. So we have an additional \$250 million in GO Transit improvements in addition to that.

You will see that what we are doing is building upon what we have already done in terms of expanding GO service, and we'll be doing even more while creating thousands upon thousands of jobs in this province—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

### GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** To the Deputy Premier: Ted Kindos has been playing a sick game of who's on first and what's on second, as a result of this government's contradictory approach to tobacco versus marijuana smoke. Ted Kindos is the owner of Gator Ted's in Burlington and has been told by the Ontario Human Rights Commission that he must permit a patron to smoke marijuana on his premises, and yet another Ontario division, the Alcohol and Gaming Commission, has also told him he will be shut down if he allows this person to light up.

1130

Minister, can you tell us who is on first at Gator Ted's? Is it the AGC or the HRC, because "I don't know" is on third and Ted is in the batting cage right now.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** To the Minister of Government Services.

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** Thank you very much for the question. I know Gator Ted. He runs an establishment in my hometown. He's a wonderful fellow who works very, very hard to try to make ends meet. He's caught between, sadly, a regulatory rock and a hard place. This government is determined to make sure that we find a way to support Ted Kindos and small business people like Ted Kindos. I can't comment on the human rights appeal, and I wouldn't want to, but I do want to provide this House with assurance that being caught between a regulatory rock and a hard place is something that this government



won't stand for, and we'll make sure that this is sorted out.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** It was a year ago that I presented a private member's bill to avoid just this kind of situation, and your government shut it down. With all due respect, you and your government continue to make a mockery of our legislative system with bills that permit marijuana but ban tobacco smoke. In committee, your government gave the lame explanation that it was premature to ban marijuana with the same brush as tobacco. Gator Ted is a prime example of your incompetence, with your right hand never knowing what your left hand is doing.

It is a very simple question, Mr. Minister: Why should Gator Ted listen to anybody in this case? He's trying to run a successful business and your government rules are breaking that down.

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** Simply put, municipal, provincial and federal laws simply didn't contemplate the scenario of somebody smoking marijuana on licensed premises. The Liquor Licence Act is clear with respect to controlled substances. That, obviously, is in conflict. We've been in touch with Health Canada, which has been offering us some advice. Again, I'm speaking quite independently of the human rights case. Those who need medical marijuana obviously to alleviate pain and discomfort—that is something that we understand and are sympathetic with. Health Canada advice to those who need medical marijuana is to use their discretion and avoid smoking marijuana in public places.

We'll get to the bottom of this and we'll do it in a way that protects small business people in the province of Ontario.

## TOURISM

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is to the Minister of Tourism. Last week, the minister released a \$4-million tourism report that took almost a year to produce. The good people in Haliburton do not need a report to tell them that the tourism sector is struggling. They've seen a number of resorts close: the Maple Sands Resort, the Lochaven Inn, the Birch Point Lodge, Cherokee Resort, and the list goes on. How does this government's \$4-million report assist Haliburton's battered tourism sector, and what are you going to do about it now?

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I'm delighted to have an opportunity to talk about the competitiveness study, which was released last Wednesday at the AGO. First off, I want to thank Greg Sorbara, the member for Vaughan, who did such an incredible job in his consultations across the province. As part of his consultations, he met with over 500 stakeholders and he held 13 regional meetings. We also retained experts and produced 13 studies that will help to inform our policy in tourism moving forward.

What he's done with his competitiveness report is to create a 10-year plan that outlines some great initiatives

and ideas for our tourism sector. We—the government—are very proud of this competitiveness study. It was requested by the industry and we responded through the budget last year in 2008. As part of the budget response, we also attached \$8 million to the study. Not all that money has been spent, but Mr. Sorbara has done an excellent job in providing a road map to move the industry forward.

## USE OF QUESTION PERIOD

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would ask for a ruling to the question stated by the member for Oakville, which was answered by the Minister of Infrastructure and the supplementary answered by the Minister of Transportation. Under the current rules, there is a review of precedent that is set that no ministerial announcements should be made during question period. It appears that the GO Transit announcement was actually an announcement that was taking place in the Legislature. I would ask you to review on that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** I accept the point, to some extent, that the honourable member is making. At the time that this was raised in the Legislature it had long since passed its formal announcement made by the Prime Minister and the Premier in Etobicoke earlier this morning.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I thank the honourable members for their interjections on this issue. I will undertake a review of the Hansard and look at the Hansard in relation to the announcement this morning and will report back to the House.

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** There was a point of order earlier and it made me forget to do something, and that was introduction of guests.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** In the gallery over here—the member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan has just left. He is there with his son and three guests. They're here, and I think they're playing in a hockey tournament, but I don't have all the details. I'm pretty sure that if I am allowed to think for just two seconds, the names are going to come to me, but if not, if I could pass this introduction—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I thank everybody who had a hand in that delay. I would like to have the opportunity to introduce to the Legislature, visiting from the great riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan, first of all my son Christian Mauro, and his buddies Ryan Gibson, Colin Brescadin and Paul Benvenuto. Thank you, Speaker. Thank you to the member for London West as well.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** This House stands recessed until 3 this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1137 to 1500.*

## ROYAL ASSENT SANCTION ROYALE

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, Her Honour the Administrator has been pleased to assent to a certain bill.

**The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker):** The following is the title of a bill to which Her Honour did assent:

Bill 145, An Act to resolve labour disputes between York University and Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 3903 / *Projet de loi 145, Loi visant à régler les conflits de travail entre l'Université York et la section locale 3903 du Syndicat canadien de la fonction publique.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** It is my honour to introduce and welcome Rabbi Reuven Bulka, a spiritual force in our great city of Ottawa, and his wife, Leah Bulka, to Queen's Park. Welcome.

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** It gives me honour this afternoon to welcome a former student of mine, now a student at Algonquin College in Ottawa, taking the computer systems technician program: Kevin Cumming from Long Sault.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### HEALTH CARE

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** I rise in the House today to speak for the health care needs of the Burlington community. This morning, Minister Caplan stood in his place and said, "It's important to remember that local health integration networks are tasked with local health planning, and that's why they commissioned the Hay Group to look at all of the hospitals and what they should be able to do to find ways to make the system work better for the community that it serves." Well, I hate to be the one who bursts the minister's bubble, but his administration has taken the "local" out of LHINs. Hospitals and health care providers are having great difficulty getting the LHINs to take into account local issues, and that chain continues unbroken right into the minister's office.

LHINs, like the Ontario Public School Boards' Association, were created by this government to deflect criticism away from the minister's responsibilities. They are in fact the new scapegoats of the education and health ministers. It is clear, as Mr. McGuinty literally begins to distance himself from the press, that his government is incapable of operating an accountable and transparent administration for the benefit of all the taxpayers of

Ontario, and it always is the hard-working Ontarians who are left to suffer.

## ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** I rise here today to present to the Legislature the results of my prebudget consultation held throughout my riding of Richmond Hill. The democratic process is not limited to elections. We need to maintain an ongoing dialogue with our constituents. During December and January, several outreach initiatives were undertaken to encourage residents to participate in providing their thoughts and ideas for the upcoming provincial budget. The response from my constituents has been gratifying and I can say that, based on what my constituents have said, they understand the economic challenges that we are facing today.

The following questions were asked, and here are the responses:

Should the province consider going into a deficit for this budget? Fifty-six per cent answered yes; 35% said no.

In what area would you encourage the Minister of Finance to spend? Answers were infrastructure, health care, education and training.

What should be the provincial government's top three priorities for Richmond Hill? Answers were infrastructure, economic stimulus and health care.

Finally, I would like to thank my constituents for taking the time to provide me with their suggestions and insight. It is my belief that by involving the constituents we can move closer to meeting the needs of all Ontarians.

## TERMINATION AND SEVERANCE PAYMENTS

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** Last Saturday morning I met with representatives from the recently severed Nortel employees group. These are highly skilled workers and professionals who, like many Ontarians, have lost their jobs. However, between when these workers were originally severed and when they were due to receive their severance payments, Nortel went into bankruptcy protection on January 14. As a result, these approximately 300 individuals who were expecting severance payments are now scrambling to figure out how to pay their bills and mortgages. To make matters worse, I understand that Nortel is not co-operating in providing records of employment, termination notices and other documentation these people need to apply for employment insurance or pension benefits.

I recognize that the bankruptcy laws come under the federal Parliament. However, the Minister of Labour has the power and must ensure that Nortel does provide information and documentation that these workers need as soon as possible. He must act on their behalf, and there is no reason for any delay.



## TEACHERS

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I was very pleased last week that the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario and the government resolved their impasse, but the problems that the teachers have raised have not disappeared and will not disappear. They talk about problems in the field of special education. They talk about the problems of English as a second language. They talk about a lack of librarians, who are so critical in the learning of our students, young and old. They talk about the lack of physical education teachers as well.

While we know how many teacher-librarians we have, we sometimes don't know whether those few dollars that might be going to teacher-librarians are used for that purpose. While we know how many physical education teachers there are, we absolutely have no clue how much of our money is going for special ed and how many of our dollars are used for ESL. There is a complete lack of transparency, something Liberals talked about before 2003 and something we see very little of today.

They love to talk about the idea of having annual budget reviews of our educational system, and that promise is no longer there. Now more than ever, we need transparency about how our dollars are being spent. Our parents deserve to know, politicians deserve to know, and that's what I hope the government will move to some day.

## MARY WELSH

**Mr. Dave Levac:** On January 22 at Queen's Park, I was able to join many to observe the investiture of the Order of Ontario, in which a constituent from Brant, Ms. Mary Welsh of Brantford, was appointed and invested by the Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable David C. Onley.

As all of you are aware, the Order of Ontario is the province's highest official honour bestowed to an individual citizen in recognition of service of the greatest distinction and of singular excellence in any field of endeavour. Each year, approximately 25 individuals are invested, and Mary Welsh, who was recognized for nearly 40 years of dedication to numerous community and civic contributions, was one of the distinguished individuals bestowed with this award for this year.

Mary Welsh, who is still going strong, is a long-time resident of Brantford, a former educator, a former city councillor, a former trustee and former board chair, and an entrepreneur. She was the driving force behind the creation of the Brant Animal Aid Foundation and the Brant Waterways Foundation. Most recently, she founded the BCI and VS Alumni Association, established Save BCI, and was helpful in securing a \$23.9-million rebuild of BCI right on Brant Avenue. This year, she promoted a fundraiser for Brant Waterways that received \$30,000 for improvement and expansion of the adjacent water systems. This woman is amazing.

The award would not have been possible if it were not for the nominations of long-time contributors Paul

Emerson, Paul Randolph, former MP Jane Stewart, and Bonnie Blunt. We congratulate Mary on becoming an Order of Ontario recipient.

## PREMIER OF ONTARIO

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** I rise to talk about space. Mr. McGuinty wants five feet of space between himself and the Queen's Park reporters. They're quite a vicious group, I understand. I guess the heat of the recession is becoming too much to handle. Mr. McGuinty also seems to be putting a lot of space between himself and his responsibilities. He gives lip service to our reeling economy, but when it comes to getting results, there's only hot air. Ontario has so much potential, so much space to grow, yet the McGuinty Liberals keep cramming that space full of red tape and bans, stifling our creative entrepreneurial spirit.

When we wanted answers after a long break filled with scandals, boondoggles and more economic devastation, Mr. McGuinty found a way to put some serious space between himself and the Legislature: about 50 kilometres' worth of space, in fact.

## 1510

It's no wonder that Mr. McGuinty is afraid of the press gallery these days. Though small in number, they are asking some pretty tough questions, and the predictable, scripted answers aren't cutting it anymore. A five-foot buffer might make the Premier feel safe, but to others it reeks of insecurity. Ontario needs a strong leader, not one who seems lost in space.

## CYCLONE MANUFACTURING

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** In January, the Premier visited Cyclone Manufacturing in Meadowvale, in western Mississauga, to announce that Ontario is investing \$7.7 million during the next five years to support innovation in our western Mississauga manufacturing community.

Cyclone Manufacturing is a state-of-the-art firm in the manufacturing industry. They make precision parts for such aerospace manufacturers as Boeing, Bombardier and Embraer. Cyclone uses new materials and computerized custom fabrication techniques to make lighter-weight aircraft parts. These parts allow aircraft to be lighter, stronger and more fuel-efficient, lowering costs for airlines and reducing emissions.

With Ontario's help, Cyclone Manufacturing is getting results—133 new jobs in Mississauga—by investing in new technology to improve its products and develop new business. During the next five years, Cyclone plans to spend \$50 million to develop their products and technology. The Next Generation of Jobs Fund will help Cyclone further boost innovation in Ontario, create more well-paid, high-tech jobs in western Mississauga and sustain our region's economic activity that is even now extending Credit Valley Hospital through its phase II expansion and improving public transportation through more train capacity on the Milton GO line.



## KINDNESS WEEK

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** February 16 to 22 is Kindness Week in Ottawa. Started in 2008 by Rabbi Reuven Bulka, Kindness Week hopes to strengthen a culture of compassion and kindness that will prevail over pessimism and cynicism. Kindness Week hopes to inspire random acts of kindness by showing the profound impact even the smallest kind act can have on a community.

The Kindness Committee is asking everyone in Ottawa to choose to be kind. Acts can be as simple as reaching out to someone less fortunate or just saying thank you to a friend.

One of the driving tools behind Kindness Week is the kindness card, which carries the "pay it forward" message. More than 200,000 cards will be distributed throughout the community at events, in schools, workplaces and restaurants by the Kindness Crew. Card recipients are encouraged to do something kind and then leave the card behind. Ottawa police officers will be handing out kindness citations to individuals caught being kind during Kindness Week. Also, the Drive for Drivers Project is recruiting reliable, enthusiastic volunteer drivers to provide transportation services for seniors and adults with disabilities to attend their essential medical appointments.

Kindness Week is made possible thanks to a committee of volunteers from government, not-for-profit, corporate, education, and restaurant and hospitality sectors, and is facilitated by United Way/Centraide Ottawa.

I want to encourage all members to bring Kindness Week back to their ridings and help make every community in Ontario a kinder and friendlier place.

## MICHAEL FREEMAN

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** On Wednesday, January 7, 2009, I was saddened to attend the funeral of another soldier from Peterborough who lost his life while serving his country. Private officer Michael B. Freeman died on December 26, 2008, while on duty with the Canadian Armed Forces in Afghanistan. On January 7, our community gathered to celebrate his life and acknowledge the tremendous sacrifice made by private officer Michael Freeman.

Michael, like most young men growing up in Peterborough, had a love for the outdoors. As Michael matured, he joined the air cadets with dreams of becoming a pilot, but changed his mind in 2005 and joined the army.

Private officer Michael Freeman approached life with a generous heart and humour. He was admired by all who knew him and will be greatly missed.

As I sat at this young man's funeral, I felt great pride for the soldiers from Peterborough who have made the ultimate sacrifice for their country. I know that everyone at the funeral shared my sense of pride.

At the age of 28, private officer Michael Freeman understood the need to protect those unable to defend themselves. He, like all of our soldiers serving abroad,

rose to the challenges of defending the rights of others. They go to battle willingly, without regard to their own safety. I am humbled by their bravery and their commitment to improve the lives of others.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** I beg leave to present a report on Archives of Ontario and information storage and retrieval services from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and move the adoption of its recommendations.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Mr. Sterling presents the committee's report and moves the adoption of its recommendations. Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** For the students who are with us today, I chair a committee called the public accounts committee, which deals with the Auditor General's report each year. We call witnesses in front of us and examine the auditor's recommendations to improve, in this case, the public archives of Ontario.

In this case, the auditor found that far too many bureaucrats, people working in the government, were sending most of their files to the Archives of Ontario, instead of going through those files and eliminating things that didn't need to be kept. As a consequence, the archives have been overwhelmed with boxes and boxes of records which have very, very little historic importance—to how the government of Ontario came to decisions and the history of Ontario. Our committee, after reviewing the report as well as calling the archivists of Ontario in front of us, made several recommendations mostly pointed at the bureaucracy to do a better job of cleaning out those records before they send them on to the archives.

My committee works into a non-partisan way. Most committees in the Ontario Legislature have a partisan aspect to them: One party takes one position, and the other party takes the other position. In this particular committee, the public accounts committee, we have issued about 50 reports over the last five years, and on none of those reports has there been a dissenting opinion—any one party or any one member of the committee going against what the committee decides as a whole. I think it's one of the committees that should be looked at in the future, in terms of emulating how politicians from all parties can come to a common conclusion which will improve the bureaucracy, the administration, of Ontario government for the future, ultimately benefiting the people of Ontario and the students of Ontario as well.

I move adjournment of the debate.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Debate adjourned.*



## STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** I beg leave to present a report on outbreak preparedness and management from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and move the adoption of its recommendations.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Mr. Sterling presents the committee's report and moves the adoption of its recommendations. Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** This, again, was part of the Auditor General's 2007 annual report. It dealt with how the government was doing with regard to preparing for an influenza pandemic, and if that happens to Ontario, what is the plan that we will have for the people of Ontario?

The committee was most interested to find out that Ontario actually, in comparison to other provinces and states in the United States, has progressed fairly well along the way with regard to formulating a plan. However, that plan is not yet public. Part of the concern of the committee is that if a pandemic did hit today, people would not know what the terms and the details of that plan might or might not be.

1520

As well, we made about 12 different recommendations, and two of those recommendations dealt with some of the details that are involved. For instance, we have asked the Ministry of Health to report on steps taken to identify isolation areas where health care workers might go if they were dealing with people who had this influenza pandemic, because if you get an influenza pandemic occurring here in the province, it will spread very, very quickly and health care workers will be affected. We don't think that those health care workers should go home to their families after being infected. Therefore, we think that the Ministry of Health should be looking at that particular problem.

As well, we also believe that many people would be turned away, during an influenza pandemic, from critical care from the hospitals. Those people who are turned away no doubt will come to MPPs' offices and say, "What do I do next?" The only answer that we received from the Ministry of Health was, "Go to another hospital." Well, that just makes lines longer and longer. Therefore, the committee has recommended to the ministry to investigate the feasibility of creating alternatives for care, other than critical care, at our hospitals across the province of Ontario.

We make several recommendations in this report to ensure that school boards are consulted and know what the plans are and that the people who are responsible for implementing a plan in any community will share those with the schools as well.

I'm proud of the work that the committee did on both of these reports, and I would adjourn the debate at this time.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry? Carried.

*Debate adjourned.*

## MOTIONS

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** Mr. Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), the requirement for notice be waived with respect to ballot items 68, 70, 71 and 72.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

## PETITIONS

### HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care should recognize the importance of rural health care in Ontario; and

"Whereas the Erie St. Clair Local Health Integration Network commissioned a report by the Hay Group that recommends the downgrading of the emergency room at the Charlotte Eleanor Englehart (CEE) Hospital in Petrolia to an urgent-care ward; and

"Whereas, if accepted, that recommendation would increase the demand on emergency rooms in Sarnia; and

"Whereas, as of today, many patients are already redirected from Sarnia to the Petrolia emergency room for medical care; and

"Whereas the Petrolia medical community has stated that the loss of this emergency room will result in the loss of many of our local doctors; and

"Whereas Petrolia's retirement and nursing home communities are dependent on easy access to the CEE hospital;

"Therefore we, the undersigned petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to urge the Erie St. Clair Local Health Integration Network to completely reject the report of the Hay Group and leave the emergency room designation at Charlotte Eleanor Englehart Hospital in Petrolia."

I agree with the petition and I add my name to it.

### BATHURST HEIGHTS ADULT LEARNING CENTRE

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I was going to introduce the students and staff before I read our petition from Bais Brucha Elementary School. The students have just left, but they were welcome here. Thank you.

My petition is also from the students of Bathurst Heights, and it reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there are over 2,000 adult ESL students being served by the Bathurst Heights Adult Learning Centre, operated by the Toronto District School Board, in partnership with the province of Ontario; and

"Whereas this is the only English as a second language (ESL) learning centre in this area of the city located directly on the Spadina subway line, making it accessible for students across the city; and

"Whereas newcomers in Toronto, and in the Lawrence Heights area, need the Bathurst Heights Adult Learning Centre so they can succeed in their career opportunities; and

"Whereas the proposed revitalization of Lawrence Heights threatens the existence of the centre;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, demand that any revitalization of Lawrence Heights include a newcomer centre and ensure that the Bathurst Heights centre continues to exist in the present location."

I support the petition and affix my name to it.

#### TUITION

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** I want to thank Nora Loreto and Shelley Melanson of the Canadian Federation of Students for sending this petition to me.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas undergraduate tuition fees in Ontario have increased by 195% since 1990 and are the third-highest in all of the provinces in Canada; and

"Whereas average student debt in Ontario has skyrocketed by 250% in the last 15 years to over \$25,000 for four years of study; and

"Whereas international students pay three to four times more for the same education, and domestic students in professional programs such as law or medicine pay as much tuition as \$20,000 per year; and

"Whereas 70% of new jobs require post-secondary education, and fees reduce the opportunity for many low- and middle-income families while magnifying barriers for aboriginal, rural, racialized and other marginalized students; and

"Whereas Ontario currently provides the lowest per capita funding for post-secondary education in Canada, while many countries fully fund higher education and charge little or no fees for college and university; and

"Whereas public opinion polls show that nearly three quarters of Ontarians think the government's Reaching Higher framework for tuition fee increases of 20% to 36% over four years is unfair;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, support the Canadian Federation of Students' call to immediately drop tuition fees to 2004 levels and petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to introduce a new framework that:

"(1) Reduces tuition and ancillary fees annually for students.

"(2) Converts a portion of every student loan into a grant.

"(3) Increases per student funding above the national average."

I agree with this petition and I've signed it.

#### CHILD CUSTODY

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I have a petition from a number of residents from the city of Cornwall.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the people of Ontario, deserve and have the right to request an amendment to the Children's Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their parents and grandparents;

"Whereas subsection 20(2.1) requires parents and others with custody of children to refrain from unreasonably placing obstacles to personal relations between the children and their grandparents; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2) contains a list of matters that a court must consider when determining the best interests of a child. The bill amends that subsection to include a specific reference to the importance of maintaining emotional ties between children and grandparents; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2.1) requires a court that is considering custody of or access to a child to give effect to the principle that a child should have as much contact with each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2.2) requires a court that is considering custody of a child to take into consideration each applicant's willingness to facilitate as much contact between the child and each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child;

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Children's Law Reform Act as above to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their parents and grandparents."

As I agree with this, I'll sign it and send it to the clerks' table.

#### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I have a petition with regard to the Burk's Falls health centre signed by, I think, just about everyone in Burk's Falls, and it reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Burk's Falls and District Health Centre provides vital health services for residents of Burk's Falls and the Almaguin Highlands of all ages, as well as seasonal residents and tourists; and

"Whereas the health centre helps to reduce demand on the Huntsville hospital emergency room; and

"Whereas the operating budget for Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare is insufficient to meet the growing demand for service in the communities of Muskoka-East Parry Sound; and



"Whereas budget pressures could jeopardize continued operation of the Burk's Falls health centre.

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government and Minister of Health provide adequate increases in the operating budget of Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare to maintain current health services, including those provided by the Burk's Falls health centre."

I support this petition and have affixed my signature to it.

### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** It's good to be back. I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly. I suspect you may have heard it once or twice. I would like to thank Geoff Dugas of Tacc Drive in Churchill Meadows, my own neighbourhood in Mississauga, for having accumulated these signatures. It reads as follows:

1530

"Whereas wait times for access to surgical procedures in the western GTA area served by the Mississauga Halton LHIN are growing despite the vigorous capital project activity at the hospitals within the Mississauga Halton LHIN boundaries; and

"Whereas 'day surgery' procedures could be performed in an off-site facility, thus greatly increasing the ability of surgeons to perform more procedures, alleviating wait times for patients, and freeing up operating theatre space in hospitals for more complex procedures that may require post-operative intensive care unit support and a longer length of stay in hospital;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care allocate funds in its 2008-09 capital budget to begin the planning and construction of an ambulatory surgery centre located in western Mississauga to serve the Mississauga-Halton area and to enable greater access to 'day surgery' procedures that comprise about four fifths of all surgical procedures performed."

I am pleased to sign and support this petition and to ask page Jordan to carry it for me.

### ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I have a petition here that was sent to me by John and Anna Van Dyk of RR 2, Tavistock. It is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Honourable Leona Dombrowsky, has publicly stated that she 'absolutely' wants to help the beginning and new entrants to agriculture; and

"Whereas beginning and expanding farmers are going to be important in the coming decade, as a record number of producers are expected to leave the industry; and

"Whereas the safety net payments—i.e., Ontario cattle, hog and horticulture payments—are based on historical averages, and many beginning and expanding farmers were not in business or are just starting up in the period so named and thus do not have reflective historic allowable net sales; and

"Whereas beginning and expanding producers are likely at the greatest risk of being financially disadvantaged by poor market conditions and being forced to exit agriculture because there is not a satisfactory safety net program or payment that meets their needs;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately adjust the safety net payments made via the OCHHP to include beginning and expanding farmers, and make a relief payment to the beginning and expanding farmers who have been missed or received seriously disproportionate payments, thereby preventing beginning farmers from exiting the agriculture sector."

It's signed by a great many of my constituents, and in fact constituents from all across the province. On their behalf, I'm proud to present this petition.

### FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL POLICIES

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I have a petition entitled "Fairness for the People of Ontario" addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, which reads as follows:

"Whereas the federal government gives more support for economic development, health care and infrastructure to other parts of Canada, and unemployed workers in Ontario get less employment insurance support than in other parts of Canada;

"Whereas the federal system of taxes and equalization extracts over \$20 billion from the people of Ontario every year above and beyond what Ottawa invests in Ontario;

"Whereas laid-off workers in Ontario get \$4,630 less in employment insurance than they would get if they lived in another part of Canada;

"Whereas federal health care money is supposed to be divided equally among all Canadians, but right now Ontario residents are shortchanged by \$773 million per year;

"Whereas the federal government provides economic development support for people living in the north, Atlantic Canada, Quebec and the west, but provides little economic development support for southern Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to demand that the federal government stop gouging the people of Ontario and treat them fairly."

### CHILD CARE

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to present a petition that was given to me by Vi Ashton from the community in my riding. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services, Madeleine Meilleur, has decided that grandparents caring for their grandchildren no longer qualify for temporary care assistance; and

"Whereas the removal of the temporary care assistance could mean that children will be forced into foster care; and

"Whereas the temporary care assistance amounted to \$231 per month, much less than a foster family would receive to look after the same children if they were forced into foster care;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately reverse the decision to remove temporary care assistance for grandparents looking after their grandchildren."

I'm pleased to support that, sign it and present it to one of the new pages, Ashton.

#### TOM LONGBOAT

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I have a petition from students in Sioux Lookout, Ontario. It's a petition trying to get Tom Longboat Day recognized in this great province.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Tom Longboat, a proud son of the Onondaga Nation, was one of the most internationally celebrated athletes in Canadian history;

"Whereas Tom Longboat was voted as the number one Canadian athlete of the 20th century ... for his record-breaking marathon and long-distance triumphs against the world's best;

"Whereas Tom Longboat fought for his country in World War I and was wounded twice during his tour of duty;

"Whereas Tom Longboat is a proud symbol of the outstanding achievements and contributions of Canada's aboriginal people;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to recognize June 4 as Tom Longboat Day in Ontario."

I support Tom Longboat Day and I support this petition.

#### SALES TAX

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I have a petition titled Implement a Sales Tax Holiday for Vehicle Sales. These signatures were gathered at the De Groote-Hill GM dealership.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas potential automobile customers in North America are having trouble accessing credit and loans; and

"Whereas the automotive industry is having difficulty selling vehicles;

"We, the undersigned, petition provincial, federal and state governments to implement a sales tax holiday on the purchase of new and used cars and trucks."

The signatures here are from Norwich, Woodstock, Tillsonburg, and these were gathered in the community of Courtland.

#### POPE JOHN PAUL II

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I'm pleased to read this petition to the Parliament of Ontario that supports a private member's bill by my colleague from Newmarket-Aurora. It was sent to us by signatories from St. Stanislaus-St. Casimir's Polish Parishes Credit Union and church in Toronto. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the legacy of Pope John Paul II reflects his lifelong commitment to international understanding, peace and the defence of equality and human rights;

"Whereas his legacy has an all-embracing meaning that is particularly relevant to Canada's multi-faith and multicultural traditions;

"Whereas, as one of the great spiritual leaders of contemporary times, Pope John Paul II visited Ontario during his pontificate of more than 25 years and, on his visits, was enthusiastically greeted by Ontario's diverse religious and cultural communities;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to grant speedy passage into law of the private member's bill An Act to proclaim April 2 Pope John Paul II Day."

I'm pleased to sign and support this petition and to ask page Alexander to carry it for me.

#### SALES TAX

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** I have a petition. It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas potential automobile customers in North America are having trouble accessing credit and loans; and

"Whereas the automotive industry is having difficulty selling vehicles;

"We, the undersigned, petition provincial, federal and state governments to implement a sales tax holiday on the purchase of new and used cars and trucks."

I affix my name in full support.

#### ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I have here a petition that was sent to me by Teresa Watering in Stratford.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Honourable Leona Dombrowsky, has publicly stated that she 'absolutely' wants to help the beginning and new entrants to agriculture; and

"Whereas beginning and expanding farmers are going to be important in the coming decade, as a record number of producers are expected to leave the industry; and

"Whereas the safety net payments—i.e., Ontario cattle, hog and horticulture payments—are based on historical averages, and many beginning and expanding



farmers were not in business or are just starting up in the period so named and thus do not have reflective historic allowable net sales; and

"Whereas beginning and expanding producers are likely at the greatest risk of being financially disadvantaged by poor market conditions and being forced to exit agriculture because there is not a satisfactory safety net program or payment that meets their needs;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately adjust the safety net payments made via the OCHHP to include beginning and expanding farmers, and make a relief payment to the beginning and expanding farmers who have been missed or received seriously disproportionate payments, thereby preventing beginning farmers from exiting the agriculture sector."

I affix my signature, as I agree with this petition, and thank you very much for the opportunity to present it on behalf of my constituents.

1540

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2009

#### LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LES SERVICES À L'ENFANCE ET À LA FAMILLE

Ms. Matthews moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 103, An Act to amend the Child and Family Services Act and to make amendments to other Acts /  
Projet de loi 103, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfance et à la famille et apportant des modifications à d'autres lois.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I'll recognize the Minister of Children and Youth Services to lead off the debate.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm pleased to rise today to speak in support of Bill 103, the Child and Family Services Statute Law Amendment Act, 2008, which I introduced in September and which is now before this House for third reading. I'll be sharing my time with my extraordinary parliamentary assistant, the member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex.

The objective of this proposed legislation is to create a single youth justice system in Ontario. That means moving young people out of youth units co-located in adult correctional facilities. They will all be in dedicated stand-alone youth justice facilities.

This legislation, if passed, will enable the end of a process that began in 2004. At that time, the responsibility for youth justice services was transferred to the Ministry of Children and Youth Services from the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Since that time, our government has been working

hard to transform the youth justice system in our province. In youth-dedicated facilities, youth will be held accountable for their actions, but they will also have access to programs designed specifically to reduce the risk of reoffending and improve their integration into society.

Our youth justice programs are based on evidence, not ideology. One of our youth justice service principles is that programs and services need to be evidence-based, they need to be evaluated for effectiveness, and they need to be guided by standards to increase the likelihood that youth get what they need in order to return to their community as productive, contributing members. That's why we worked closely with experts such as Dr. Alan Leschied at the University of Western Ontario, and Dr. Bob Hoge and Dr. Don Andrews at Carleton University. A considerable focus of their research is devoted to reducing reoffending. It informs many of our policies.

As soon as a young person enters one of our facilities, we develop a plan for that youth. The plan is designed to promote reintegration and prevent future crime.

Research supports our practices, including gender-specific programming, career counselling and social supports. In the past, the emphasis in the Ontario youth justice system was on providing a secure custodial environment for young people in conflict with the law, but evidence clearly shows that a broad range of community-based and custodial programs and services can reduce reoffending. That's why our government's focus has shifted towards the creation of a system that provides a broad range of alternatives to custody. These alternative programs are designed to meet the needs of youth in conflict with the law. These programs include, for example, anger and stress management; school-based diversion programs; counselling; and other job-related training opportunities.

This legislation will support those efforts so that young people who find themselves on the wrong side of the law will have access to meaningful support. They'll have access to programs designed to help make changes in their young lives, to turn their backs on crime and to become productive community members in our society.

Our government's commitment to reducing crime and protecting law-abiding citizens is clear. When serious crimes are committed or the safety of the community is at risk, we will do what is necessary to protect the property and lives of the people of Ontario.

Since this legislation was introduced, a number of members on both sides of the House have risen to speak about its impact on youth in conflict with the law. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my thanks to all of the members who spoke in support of this legislation during debate at second reading. In particular, I'd like to thank my parliamentary assistant, the member for Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, for taking this bill through committee and for her ongoing dedication to young people. I'd also like to thank my colleagues the member for Don Valley West, the member for Eglinton-Lawrence and the member for Mississauga-Streetsville



for their thoughtful remarks during debate. I'd like to extend my thanks to the members of the Standing Committee on Social Policy for their diligent work. Through their efforts, we were able to amend this legislation, based on input from all parties and several presenters. In particular, I'd like to thank Ontario's child advocate for his work and advocacy on behalf of youth, including those in our youth justice system. We have enormous respect for his work and for his office, which is why our government made the advocate's office independent.

The committee also heard from groups such as Justice for Children and Youth and Defence for Children International. It heard from people deeply involved in the youth justice system, such as Alex Munter from the Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa. It also heard directly from citizens who wanted their voice heard in the legislative process. It received thoughtful written submissions from groups, including the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies.

All members of the committee were clearly dedicated to ensuring the safety of our communities and creating a youth justice system tailored to the needs of youth. The committee ensured that the proposed legislation addressed the ability of elected officials, the advocate and the Ombudsman to visit facilities. It also made sure that communication between a young person's lawyer, elected officials, the advocate and the Ombudsman would always be kept confidential. Finally, members worked together to develop an amendment that would improve accountability. The amendment requires youth justice facilities to report every six months on the need for a secure isolation room. The amendments the committee passed will ensure that there's greater accountability and transparency in our system. The amendments also take care to balance the rights of youth with the safety of our communities—something we all care about.

Since this proposed legislation was last debated in the House last fall, changes beyond the committee amendments have taken place. I was very thankful to receive the report on the roots of youth violence from former Chief Justice Roy McMurtry and former Speaker Alvin Curling. Their report spoke to the need for society to engage youth before they commit crime by improving community supports and combatting racism and poverty. Last December, I was extremely pleased to release Ontario's first-ever poverty reduction strategy, *Breaking the Cycle*. These important initiatives have given us a better understanding of the needs of youth and why they come into conflict with the law, and set out a course of action that will reduce the number of young people turning to crime.

We all agree that youth in conflict with the law have different needs than adult offenders. Our government continues to move ahead with efforts to relocate young people from youth units that are currently co-located in adult facilities to new centres that are designed with youth in mind. By April 1 of this year, all young people in custody and detention in youth units that are co-located in adult correctional facilities in Ontario will be

relocated to one of our secure youth-focused justice centres located in communities across the province. There, they will have access to supports and programs that are tailored to their needs and an environment that's appropriate for them. As the evidence shows us, this is a crucial element in successfully reintegrating young people back into society without reoffending. The first of these youth justice centres opened last summer in Sault Ste. Marie, and I just recently had the opportunity to attend the opening of the William E. Hay Youth Centre in Ottawa.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the men and women who staff our youth justice facilities. It is through their dedication, their patience and their very hard work that we will continue to make progress for our youth. We'll continue to give young people who make mistakes the opportunity to lead productive and fulfilling lives.

#### 1550

I'd also like to thank the former deputy of the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, Jessica Hill. It is thanks to her vision that we're able to move forward today.

I would also like to thank my assistant deputy minister, Gilbert Tayles. He has an incredible passion for youth justice. I continue to appreciate his work and his support.

Creating an appropriate youth justice system is a priority for our government. We are taking action to protect our communities against those individuals or groups who engage in crime or attempt to entice others into breaking the law.

Bill 103, if passed, will be an essential part of the transformation process we began in 2004. I encourage all members of this House to support it.

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** I, too, am pleased to rise today to join my colleague and speak in support of Bill 103, the Child and Family Services Statute Law Amendment Act, 2008, which was first introduced last September by my colleague the Minister of Children and Youth Services—and I certainly want to thank her for her very kind remarks.

This bill is designed to create a single legislative framework for all youth between the ages of 12 and 17 in Ontario who find themselves in conflict with the law. It will create a single, youth-focused piece of legislation, the Child and Family Services Act, and will repeal sections of the Ministry of Correctional Services Act that dealt with older young people. By creating a single legislative framework for youth justice services, we can support efforts to establish a fully functional and separate youth justice system for young people aged 12 to 17 at the time of their offences in Ontario. That means that we will be able to move older youth out of youth units located in adult correctional facilities.

Our province has been blessed with the dedication and commitment of hundreds of men and women who work with troubled youth of varying ages and backgrounds. They respect the rights of youth and treat them with dignity, respect and firmness. By doing this, these men and women work to instill a sense of responsibility in the



young people with whom they are working. Every day, our youth justice system workers are making a real, significant difference in the lives of young people across Ontario. They have steered countless kids away from a path that leads to drugs and crime and set them on to a road to becoming responsible and productive citizens.

Our government is establishing a dedicated, fully integrated youth correctional system that will better allow the type of programming and supports our staff want to provide, in a manner that is responsive to the needs of youth. This means that we can provide programs and services to help youth in an environment that is uniquely tailored to their needs.

As I've indicated earlier, a major component of the new youth justice correctional system is the commitment to stop housing young people in youth units that are part of adult correctional facilities. As a government, we have committed, by April 1 of this year, to move these young people and transfer them to dedicated, stand-alone youth centres. To accomplish this goal, we are constructing several new youth justice facilities across the province.

The first of these opened last summer in Sault Ste. Marie. The Donald Doucet Youth Centre is named after a local police officer who was killed in the line of duty in 2006. It recognizes Constable Doucet's commitment to mentoring the youth of Sault Ste. Marie, not only through sports, but also by acting as a role model. The centre provides secure custody for 16 young men and women who have received dispositions for a range of offences, but it also offers training programs to teach job skills, rehabilitation supports for those with problems caused by drugs and alcohol, as well as services to show young people that they can deal with their problems without resorting to crime or violence. These are the lessons we must teach these young people to reduce the risk that they will reoffend.

The finishing touches are also being put on a new youth justice centre in Brampton, as well as Thunder Bay and Fort Frances. An existing facility in Ottawa is also undergoing an expansion so that it can better serve the Ottawa-area male youth who would otherwise be co-located in an adult facility.

To respond to the special needs of aboriginal youth in conflict with the law, the facility at Fort Frances will offer a special emphasis on traditional aboriginal culture and healing strategies. This facility will be operated by an aboriginal service provider and is the first of its kind in Canada.

These facilities will be operational in 2009.

These efforts are important, but they represent only one aspect of our efforts to help young people make the right choices. That is why the Ministry of Children and Youth Services is continuing to implement its alternatives to custody and community intervention strategy. This strategy is designed to complement existing programs that provide alternatives to incarceration for young people aged 12 to 17. Right now, the strategy has 184 programs currently active across Ontario. As an example, we have established 32 youth intervention centres across

the province that offer non-residential programs and support to youth in conflict with the law. As an alternative to custody, these centres offer timely and effective programs such as training in anger management, life skills, and counselling on how to get and keep a job. They are operated by local agencies with experience in dealing with youth in conflict with the law and are funded through a partnership with the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

The government has also implemented 17 alternative-to-custody programs for aboriginal young people in communities across the province. These programs help provide aboriginal youth in conflict with the law with support and special services in an environment that responds to their specific needs and is relevant to their culture.

Our government has also worked with community partners to establish the African-Canadian youth criminal justice program, to provide support and services to youth in conflict with the law at four locations in the greater Toronto area.

The problems that are faced by our youth during these unsettled economic times are complex and cannot be solved by quick fixes or easy solutions. Finding the right balance between the need to nurture while also holding young people accountable is sometimes difficult. While this legislation recognizes the need to protect our communities from young people who are a danger to themselves and others, it also provides safeguards so that the rights of all young persons in custody are respected and protected. For instance, all young people in custody must be able to communicate with those who have their best interests at heart, such as family members, lawyers and provincial officials who have taken an interest in their case. As the minister has said, we have amended Bill 103 to ensure young people in custody are able to communicate privately with their solicitors and with officials such as the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, the Ombudsman, and members of provincial and federal Parliaments.

I was happy that the Standing Committee on Social Policy worked together to improve the bill in order to provide greater accountability and transparency. The amendments make it clear that any written communication between a young person in custody and any of the officials that I've just mentioned cannot be opened, inspected, examined or read. The committee also amended the bill so that while facilities can restrict visitors during an emergency, MPPs, MPs, the Ombudsman and the advocate can only be limited by a decision of the provincial director. As MPPs, it is imperative that we have access to these types of facilities but recognize that during extreme circumstances it may be unsafe to be in a facility of this nature.

1600

Committee members worked hard to balance the rights of youth while keeping them responsible for their actions. The citizens of Ontario expect that their communities will remain safe and that those who break the law will



face the consequences of their actions. At the same time, they recognize that by offering rehabilitation in a supportive environment, many young people will learn new skills and become a credit to themselves and to their communities.

We believe the changes we are proposing to our youth justice system will help young people in conflict with the law make the right choices and take advantage of the many opportunities that our province has to offer. As well, this system will hold accountable those who break the law and choose not to take responsibility for their actions.

These measures, in concert with other steps that we have taken to reduce poverty and improve the quality of life for all our citizens, will continue to play an important role in helping to reduce the rate of youth crime in this province. By reducing poverty, strengthening communities and creating opportunity, we are lessening the incentives to commit crime and reduce the number of kids who will find themselves in conflict with the law.

Our government's poverty reduction strategy provides an excellent framework that will serve to guide our efforts to reduce the number of children living in poverty by 25% over five years. That will lead to safer and stronger communities.

For these reasons and others that I'm sure my colleagues will also outline, I would urge all members of the House to join me in supporting these proposed amendments and Bill 103.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I'm pleased to offer some comments on Bill 103 for the Legislature. My colleague and the critic, the member for York-Simcoe, will be addressing the Legislature, I believe, next. I look forward to her comments because it's an issue for which she has great passion, knowledge and experience, and I know she will bring forward some very helpful suggestions on how to improve aspects of Bill 103. I know that the PC caucus has a number of concerns with respect to the bill and will bring forward those suggestions, I think, in a very productive manner.

As the finance critic, I do hope that, as well, the Legislature will be soon turning its focus to the ongoing and, sadly, dramatic change in economic fortunes in the province of Ontario. We brought this up in question period today, asking the government or asking the Premier to move forward immediately with a budget. We've seen other jurisdictions, whether it be Quebec, British Columbia, Alberta, Prince Edward Island—certainly the federal government under Prime Minister Harper, the Obama administration in the States, and Gordon Brown, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, have all brought forward their own packages to try to stimulate the economy to help create jobs and invest in key infrastructure to improve the productivity of their various jurisdictions.

Sadly, Dalton McGuinty has been seemingly paralyzed by the ongoing and increasingly dire economic

news. So we look forward to my colleague the critic's comments on Bill 103. But I do hope that we will see the Legislature soon, if not immediately, turn its mind to the growing economic crisis in our province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. Jim Watson:** I'm very pleased to stand in support of Bill 103, which is the Child and Family Services Statute Law Amendment Act. This particular piece of legislation is going to do two things: It's going to make communities safer, and it's going to give youth a better opportunity to succeed.

It's timely that we're talking about this today because in today's Ottawa Citizen, there's a very good story about the youth detention facility called the William Hay centre in the city of Ottawa that is scheduled to open and expand from 24 beds to 40 beds because, as a result of decisions this government has made, we're moving these young people from the adult regional detention centre and bringing them into this new youth facility. I want to congratulate people like Alex Munter and Brian Ford and Dick Brown and people involved with the YSB, which runs that facility for us.

We're proud of the record of this government and proud of providing additional funds for the city of Ottawa for things like 95 new police officers and, in addition to that, six officers from the guns and gangs task force who are working to eliminate and curb the activities of young offenders involved in gang activities in the city of Ottawa.

We've put more crown attorneys, more justices of the peace and more judges into the court system. We are also investing in a youth drug rehab centre. I'm very proud to be associated with that, working with people like Len Potechin and Ron Caza, Michael Allen from the United Way, and Chief Vern White of the city of Ottawa police department.

We're tough on crime but we're also tough on the causes of crime. That's why we have to work with organizations like the United Way and the Youth Services Bureau to ensure that young people don't get involved in crime in the first place, but that if they do, they're brought to justice in a fair and reasonable fashion. That's what this bill is all about, and I'm very proud to support it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** During questions and comments, the Speaker recognizes members on the basis of rotation if necessary, but not necessarily rotation. I apologize to the member for Welland and recognize him now.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** What about seniority?

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I'm going to be speaking to this bill in, oh, probably 30 or 40 minutes' time. I expect that the bill may well go to a third reading vote today and I expect that it's going to pass. It, however, does give us an opportunity, because the respective critics—from the Conservative Party, Ms. Munro; and Ms. Horwath—have worked very hard in committee, along with their Liberal



counterparts, in reviewing the bill. We weren't necessarily pleased with all of the amendments that failed to pass, but there was a lot of hard work by a lot of people. There were some special concerns, of course, by the provincial advocate in terms of the failure of the government to consult him; he's the provincial advocate for children.

I regret the presumption that somehow it's only going to be feel-good approaches that are going to protect people from crime of any sort, especially youth crime. I heard once, quite a while ago, that the definition of a redneck is a liberal whose home was broken into last night. It's amazing how people's perspectives change when it's your kid or your family member who's assaulted, or when it's your house that's B-and-E'd, or when it's your car that's vandalized. People's perspectives can shift very, very quickly. I think we have to understand that. I have no intention of Pollyannaizing issues—

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Is that a word?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Mr. Hudak asks, "Is that a word?" It is now. It's a neologism.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Oh, there you go. I'll use it now.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I have no interest whatsoever in Pollyannaizing issues around crime in general or around youth crime. We have to treat this stuff very seriously—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

I'll return, then, to one of the government speakers.

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** I want to thank the members for Niagara West—Glanbrook, Ottawa West—Nepean and Welland for their comments.

I think that all of us who sat on the standing committee worked very hard to create a balanced and good piece of legislation to take forward. It often can be said that the key intent of this legislation is to reduce the amount of reoffending that goes on. We want to make sure that the facilities that take care of our youth have the opportunity to provide the proper programming so that we won't have as much reoffending going on in the future.

The comments made by the member for Welland about the child advocate—we have worked with the child advocate and we appreciate his input into the amendments that we brought forward at the standing committee. There were a number of representations brought forward at the standing committee. All of them were very valuable to us in trying to create the kind of legislation that we can all be proud of.

1610

The member from Niagara West—Glanbrook mentioned the economy. Definitely, in a time like this, it becomes very difficult for our youth. It is something that we have to take very much into consideration, and we hope that through our poverty reduction strategy we will be able to avert some of that type of thing, because it puts a lot of stress on our young people. They certainly feel the pressures that their parents are experiencing. So we need to make sure we can help them through this time as well.

All of this is very important, so, as I say, I thank very much all the members who have spoken to this, and I hope that we can all support this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Further debate?

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** Certainly, it's my pleasure to be able, on behalf of the official opposition, to make some comments today as we enter into third reading on Bill 103.

Previous speakers, particularly the minister, made reference to the fact that Bill 103 was designed, or has as its fundamental purpose, to meet requirements that were made some time ago to move what was policy into legislation. The government then brought this bill before the House in the fall of 2008 with a view to the fact that the policy's sunset was April 2009. So the purpose of the bill, in the most simple terms, was simply to harmonize the youth criminal justice system so that the individuals, 16- and 17-year-olds, who had been under the old adult system would then all be brought together under the Youth Criminal Justice Act, as they are now, and then they would be in the same buildings.

There were a number of issues that were raised during the hearings and during the time that people were able to learn more about the bill, and I guess the most important one was that raised by the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth. I just want to quote a couple of comments that he made in his presentation to the social policy committee:

"The first is that Bill 103 was presented to our office only as a piece of legislation created to address 'house-keeping issues,' and that was by the ministry." Further on he says that "... as I read Bill 103 closely, I realized that the proposed changes were very much more than housekeeping." He goes on to explain the fact that, first of all, there were sections in this bill that actually related to the piece of legislation under which he is guided, and there were changes contemplated in this bill that had never been told to him. It was only on the reading of the bill that he discovered that it actually had an impact on his ability to do business.

So I think it's important to understand that while it was the purpose to bring this process of the younger and older offenders together, there are certainly some issues that materialized. The question of the opening of mail was one that was certainly surrounded by some degree of contention; the question of secure detention; and, as I say, the office of the provincial advocate.

One of the other presenters was Mr. Matthew Geigen-Miller, who represented Defence for Children International. He began his remarks this way: "I want to start by saying that we disagree that this is a housekeeping bill.... in my view, this bill doesn't strike the right balance; it strikes out."

So there were certainly experts within the community who had some very serious and important questions about the bill and about the resolution, then, of these issues that had to be addressed during the process of debate and of amendment at the committee hearing. The



ones I've mentioned—we accepted the government amendment which was introduced with regard to the opening of mail. We also recognize that the government moved on the issues of establishing protocols for the child advocate. The third one, supported by the opposition, was the question of a six-month review on secure isolation.

As previous speakers have chosen to talk about what I consider to be not directly in the legislation but issues of the day, issues that we should be talking about, I'm very concerned about the fact that there are two that have received press conferences but very little action on the part of the government. The first one was the Curling and McMurtry report on the roots of youth violence. When you looked at the materials, under the actual roots of youth violence, in this order, it dealt with poverty, racism, the impact of communities' design, the education system, and then the family. I think that the question of the family is one that should receive more attention than it would suggest by its placement in that order I've mentioned.

In that part of *The Review of the Roots of Youth Violence* it has a brief description of issues like single parents, absent fathers, teenage parents and immigrant and refugee families. I think, though, that there are a couple of things that are pertinent to our discussion on Bill 103, and that comes from the same section of *The Review of the Roots of Youth Violence*; it's the crossover children. Children and youth in the child protection system often cross over to other systems, such as the criminal justice system. Based on our consultations, particularly with people working with children and youth, the fate of crossover kids is a concern that has not received sufficient attention.

In the report *Crossover Kids: Care to Custody*, the Office of Child and Family Service Advocacy's chief advocate, Judy Finlay, pointed out that "A disproportionate number of youth in the young offender system have been in the care of child welfare authorities in Ontario." She saw a trajectory from the children's service sector to the young offender system. Finlay cited a study showing that children and youth who have been removed from their homes and placed in a group home have significantly more behavioural problems than those placed in foster care. Foster care is often the preferred option but it is harder to place youth, particularly those who are older or who may have a record.

Finlay also cites a study that found that youth in the young offender system have had multiple placements in the children's residential care system and have also been moved frequently within the young offender services. Being moved around makes it difficult for them to get help, stay in school, hold a job, develop a sense of belonging or build trusting relationships with people who care about them. It also increases the chances that they will be drawn into the criminal justice system. According to Finlay, the literature confirms that numerous out-of-home placements typically precede a youth's incarceration.

Crossover children and youth, she says, may have mental and physical health problems, learning disabilities and unmet needs related to their culture. Those who have little or no family support and cannot navigate their way through the justice or care systems themselves often fall through the cracks. Their problems multiply, setting them on a harmful course.

1620

I felt it was important to include that in the comments today because I think that while this bill is particularly clear on an almost mechanical change, what we need to be addressing as legislators is some of the background and some of the causes and the need to support the funding to make those investments that ensure that fewer children become crossover children.

The second area that the government had a news conference, and that appears to be all—again, at the same time as the news conference on the Curling and McMurtry report—it was held between the Attorney General and the minister responsible for children and youth. On November 24, they announced, "Ontario plans to introduce family law reforms today that would, if passed, better protect women and children and reduce the cost and stress of Family Court proceedings for Ontarians." Outlined here is that there is going to be proposed family law legislation that would strengthen child and family protection in times of family breakdown and distress. It talks about strengthening abuse prevention, protecting children by ensuring information about a violent history before the court when making decisions to transfer custody to a non-parent, eliminating costly battles over the division of pensions by simplifying the rules, reducing Family Court battles, and providing fair child support through automatic annual financial disclosure. I attended this press conference, as I did the earlier one. Certainly, on the surface, this sounds very ambitious and like an appropriate thing for the government to be undertaking. But then, we've heard nothing.

We know that there is a shortage of family law practitioners. We know that access to the courts is an issue. We know that any kinds of changes such as are being contemplated would have to have along with them the question of enforcement, training and funding.

So I think the question, in looking at Bill 103, is more to do with the supports that are there and the plans that are going to be provided that would make these investments.

I also want to bring into the discussion some comments made that refer to the McMurtry-Curling report, but also cover some of the other laws that this government has undertaken. This is taken from Christina Blizzard's article of November 23.

She begins by asking, "Why is it these days that some parents seem incapable of controlling their own children?"

"Instead they turn to government to do it for them. For some baffling reason, Premier Dalton McGuinty goes ahead and complies."

Of course, here she is talking about the rules for new drivers.



She says, "Recent changes to the rules around new drivers make it easier for the minority of bad parents to slough off responsibility for their children's actions on to the government. In so doing, they punish the majority of parents and young people who abide by the law."

She goes on to talk about that particular piece of legislation and also comments on the McMurtry-Curling report. She says, "You see a similar sentiment in the recent report on youth and gang violence in this province. Former provincial Chief Justice, Roy McMurtry, and former Speaker of the Legislature, Alvin Curling, were quick to point the finger at racism, poverty, the school system. You name it. Anything but the very people who could do the most to stem the killing—the parents."

She goes on to talk about her views on some of the problems and the question of teenage marriages, the question of children and particularly boys who do not have a father figure—and then she goes back to the question of sober and responsible drivers.

But she says, "But you"—the parent—"have to teach them to make that decision for themselves. You have to educate them about why it is important and about the likely consequences of their bad decisions."

"Otherwise, we will simply raise a generation of feckless adults who can't make rational choices and who blame everyone else for their mistakes."

She concludes: "The McGuinty government should stop this social engineering and start dealing with the real issues—like the economy—right now."

I want to close on a question that I think has been raised by the work on Bill 103 and by the various people who have worked on this, and that is the question of the need for a greater understanding of the role of the child advocate. I think we need to be sure that there is research regarding the efficacy of the new system.

We have new centres across the province, at considerable cost. These new centres need to have rigorous research with regard to their outcomes. How well are we doing on the issues of rehabilitation? Is there sufficient staffing and training for staff?

In other words, this is really more about the youth justice system. All of these press conferences and all of this material will mean nothing if there haven't been the appropriate outcomes and the appropriate research into how well we're doing. That's really what we should be discussing today.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** I want to thank the member for York-Simcoe for her comments. It is true: We still have many changes that we face, one of them being crossover kids.

We recognize that prevention is very important in all of this, and that's why we do have non-residential programs and alternatives-to-custody programs that allow us to intervene before children and young people actually get involved with the court system. We have youth justice committees, which are an alternative to the formal court system, and we have found that they work very

well for young people who are low-risk offenders. What we have seen is about an 80% success rate of children who never re-offend afterwards, who never come back in contact with our justice system.

As the member had talked about, there were many things in the legislation that the standing committee looked at—the issue of the opening of the mail—and a number of comments were brought to us by presenters at the standing committee. We worked very closely with them, we took those comments very seriously and we incorporated those into amendments that all of the standing committee members worked carefully on. I was very pleased to be able to make the amendments that were necessary.

I think we'd all agree that not all legislation is perfect, but by working through the public hearings and through the standing committees together, we can make legislation that we can all be proud of.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I just wanted to commend my colleague the member for York-Simcoe and the critic on this bill, in this area of children and youth services, for her hard work, her leadership on this portfolio and her very important comments on Bill 103. I was pleased by the tone of the parliamentary assistant in response. I do hope that Ms. Munro's suggestions are incorporated as part of government policy as we move forward.

1630

She has very important observations as well. She walked us through the history of this legislation and some important comments from the youth advocate. What I thought was most compelling is when the member for York-Simcoe spoke about that important balance between parental responsibility and when it's appropriate for Legislatures to act. She quoted from Christina Blizzard's recent column on that topic.

Certainly the McGuinty government has shown a penchant for moving in the direction of, to quote from Ms. Blizzard's column, "social engineering." In fact, in several places on the Internet, Dalton McGuinty is referred to now as "Premier Dad." He has shown great interest in what kinds of snacks children can have, shown great interest in the types of light bulbs we use in our homes, shown great interest in the price of beer—for example, the government recently raised the minimum price of beer. I'm not convinced that those reflect the priorities of most working people in the province of Ontario who are greatly concerned about the state of the economy. So I do hope that Ms. Munro's points, the member for York-Simcoe, around ensuring that the important role parents play in raising a child and their decision-making, will be an important part of government's considerations.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** It's a pleasure to have an opportunity to have a couple of minutes to speak on Bill 103. I did get the opportunity to hear the comments made



earlier by some of my colleagues, and I think it's important to look at this bill in the sense that a lot of work has been done in putting this bill together and a lot of consultation has been done, as has been mentioned by the minister and the parliamentary assistant.

I know that about a year or two ago we dealt with the child advocate in a separate bill, the creation of a child advocate who reported directly to the Legislature here. That advocate has been involved in this legislation and has been briefed on portions of this legislation which affect that child advocate. I'm happy about that because the hearings that we had on the child advocate on the justice committee—about a year or a year and a half ago, if I'm not mistaken—brought a lot of deputations forward. Some of them were young people and they wanted to ensure that that child advocate was someone whom they could speak with, talk to and confide in and feel comfortable with. We made sure that the bill that was in front of us provided all of that. So incorporating that into Bill 103, the youth justice transformation legislation, and making sure that the child advocate has an opportunity to participate in this whole process, makes it very important, and I hope that the powers of the child advocate continue to stay as strong as possible.

In my perspective, that is from where I'm looking at it, and I know that the child advocate plays a very important part in making sure that the children in this province, those who need the help, are well looked after.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

I'll return to the member from York-Simcoe, who has two minutes to reply.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I'd like to thank the members from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, Niagara West-Glanbrook and Scarborough Southwest for their thoughtful comments. I think that the parliamentary assistant made reference, which I think is a good thing, to the various studies that have been done and the success rates that have been achieved in some of the programs. The point I'm making is that we have to do a better job of that and we have to make sure there is that kind of transparency for people to appreciate those programs and how effective they are.

The other point that the member from Niagara West-Glanbrook made was the question of the parent, because obviously that's where it all starts. Parental responsibility is something that we also need to foster and nurture, particularly in communities where there are not the same kind of long roots in the community. It's very difficult for a young parent to be in a setting where they don't know people, in contrast to those where they may have grown up, gone to high school there, have friends, family. Those kinds of networks and supports are extremely important. We see it in something like the closing of the Early Years centre, where people are able to come together and they have something in common, they have their children in common, and they have an opportunity to provide that sort of informal support as well as the formal support of those centres.

So I think there is a two-pronged approach that I get from the comments made by my colleagues.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Thank you kindly, Speaker. I'm not really going to be that long here this afternoon. New Democrats are supporting this legislation—not with 100% support, recognizing that there are still some flaws, but also recognizing that the fundamental issue, the issue of putting Comsoc in charge of both levels of young offenders, is not in and of itself a bad idea.

As I mentioned earlier in the two-minute comments, one of the things that concerned me for a long time is that in many respects, the left has either relinquished an effective role in law and order or had it taken from them. Tony Blair—no leftist by any stretch of the imagination, Bob Rae's mentor; that's Bob Rae, the Liberal—with his "We've got to be tough on crime and even tougher on the causes of crime": You'll notice that the Liberals, Mr. McGuinty, adopted that mantra.

Look, statistics are statistics are statistics. You get the academic types, the Ph.D. types, who want to impress the public with the fact that statistically, a certain type of crime is down; murders are down. That means absolutely nothing to the person who was just victimized by a criminal. The fact that they had a little bit better odds of surviving a walk down Yonge Street doesn't impress them when they've been mowed down by a gunman, does it? The fact that the police in your community say, "Oh, well, we've reduced the number of break-and-enters this year," when your mom comes home to find her house trashed and those irreplaceable mementoes, be it wedding photos or the ring that she inherited from her grandma, gone, never to be retrieved, the fact that statistically there may have been fewer B and E's this year in your community than there were last year, means absolutely nothing to her.

We talk about crimes of violence—reprehensible, of course—but I've got tell you, and I've had occasion to say this before, the violation of one's home, a break-and-enter, especially for a senior citizen, is one of the most invasive and damaging acts that could ever be performed on them. So many of these people who have been victimized by break-and-enters literally spend the rest of their lives in fear of a recurrence. They get up and they double-check the doors at night. They come home from the supermarket or the department store and all they can envision is a house that's been vandalized by a break-and-enter artist.

1640

Of course we have to talk about youth crime, because this you do know: Old people don't commit crimes. People "age out" in the criminal system—unless you're Conrad Black or, for that matter, Bernie Madoff. Quite frankly, there are a couple of CEOs from Nortel who should be charged with crimes who haven't been yet. But by and large, people age—I used to be a criminal lawyer. I did a lot of work with so-called young offenders back then. I was practising law before the Young Offenders



Act came in, and I've got to tell you, I was critical at the time, because what the Young Offenders Act of course did was bring 16- and 17-year-olds into that youth regime. I've got to tell you, when you've got a 17-year-old with biceps the size of tree limbs, who has the tattoos and all the gang paraphernalia, who's walking around "packing iron," as they say, it's awful hard to think of him as a child. Regrettably, here we have to talk about the corrections end of it rather than the actual legislation, the Young Offenders Act, the criminal youth justice legislation. I believe that the public of Ontario are still incredibly concerned about the effectiveness of our legislation, our criminal legislation, as it affects younger offenders.

One of the things that I've witnessed over the course of many, many years now is the inconsistency in treatment facilities and in custodial facilities, far too many of them privately operated—transfer-payment agencies—with inadequate and insufficient supervision by the provincial government. One would like to think that unifying them under Comsoc would help in that, but I'm not sure—and facilities, I tell you, that range from very good to outright flakey. There are some groups out there running young offender facilities that simply have no business being in the business—whacky. I've been to these places, and I've seen the variation in effectiveness of the programs.

Some people may have cited the observation by the United Nations, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, that youth justice courts impose sentences that avoid the detrimental effects of detention as much as possible and that youth sentences be minimal, proportional and in the child's best interests. You see, proportionality is a concept of adult sentencing. If the primary focus or goal of young offender sentencing is to intervene in a young person's life—and look, you've heard it from everybody here who has spoken to this, and again, I acted for a whole lot of those kids. Ninety-nine per cent of them were very damaged goods; I have no hesitation in telling you that. They were the victims of sexual abuse within their family or by other family members, the victims of violence, the victims of parents who were incapable and incompetent, drunken drug addicts, and many times victims of a system that let them slip aside because they were a little harder to work with than others.

I say this: You can send kids to young offender facilities all you want, just like you can send adults to jail all you want, but if you aren't doing something with them while they're there, you're wasting everybody's time, aren't you? They're going to get out sooner or later. If you haven't made a significant change in their lives, they're going to be no better, and probably worse.

I know that professionals are loath to diagnose teenagers and pre-teens as sociopathic, but you know as well as I do that if it walks like a duck, if it looks like a duck and if it quacks like a duck, it probably is. So we're actually handcuffing professionals who should be engaging in far more effective intervention for a longer period of time so that the effect of it is successful.

Look, there are some offenders in our society who simply should be locked up for the protection of society. I also have a long-time belief that there should be two types sentences: very short ones or very long ones—very long if that person is incapable of being rehabilitated; short, but sufficiently long to intervene in that person's life.

Go to some of the young offender facilities in this province and, again, look at the incredible inconsistency from facility to facility in the quality of teaching, in the level of intervention.

Come down to where I live, down in Niagara. We've talked about this in this Legislature before: the absolute paucity of youth mental health services. George Marshall, a good friend of mine, a regional councillor, a long-time therapist at the Welland County General Hospital's psychiatric wing, would tell me time and time again about his waiting list and his efforts to work with young people, knowing full well that an effective intervention could make a lifetime of difference.

I strongly believe that all correctional facilities in this province, young offender or adult, should be run by the province of Ontario, with civil service workers operating those facilities, to ensure uniformity of the type of treatment and intervention that takes place in those facilities.

I also believe that the public has a right to know whether there are dangerous offenders in their midst, whether they're 17 years old or not. I believe—and that's not for us to decide—the courts should have far more discretion in publishing a young offender's name. I'm not talking about a young offender who got picked up for stealing a package of Wrigley's gum at the corner store, although the corner store operator doesn't particularly appreciate it. I'm talking about serious offenders, violent offenders, who show little potential for changing their behaviour. I believe communities have a right to know when one of those young people, children, is in their midst. I believe courts should have far more discretion when it comes to identifying young offenders who pose a danger to the community, not only to the health and safety, but the property, of other people in that community. Communities have a right to protect themselves. Parents have a right to protect their kids. Homeowners have a right to protect their property.

I just love the line that I heard many years ago that the definition of a redneck is a liberal whose house had been broken into the night before. It's remarkable how being the victim of a crime changes people's perspective about crime.

I'll put this to you: If one of your kids was attacked, I suspect you'd do anything you had to to identify and apprehend that attacker. You might even be predisposed, rather than to sit down and want to have a little discussion, to respond in a far more visceral and perhaps even primitive way—but we'll deal with the niceties later.

People have a right to be protected against criminals.

Again, we've got to talk about young offenders, because as people age out of the system, they commit



fewer and fewer crimes. It's hard to be a second-storey man when you're my age or Mr. McMeekin's age. It's just too physically arduous and you're not likely to be doing it. It takes the agility of youth.

New Democrats have, for a long time, talked about the very sorts of things that, if we're really going to address crime—Mrs. Munro very, very appropriately put it in the context of families. I have no hesitation in saying, in that respect, I enjoy the stuff that Michael Coren has written about families and the failure of families to raise children.

Mr. Hudak will know what I'm talking about. We've got some big monster houses being built up in west St. Catharines—young families. You go canvassing at election time, and you can be there at 8 in the morning and nobody's home; you can be there at 8 at night and nobody's home. Both parents, if there are both parents, are working. You take a look through the window in the front door—none of us ever really do that, but of course we look—and you see people with a house that has a mortgage that's busting their backs with almost no furniture in it. You see some tricycles or maybe some hockey sticks, so you know there are kids there. But you also know you have two parents working eight-, 10-, 12-hour days, and you know you've got kids who aren't getting the parental contact that, in an ideal world, there should be.

1650

When you get down to minimum wage people—I've told you this before so many times. As a matter of fact, I was in the bank, giving the bank some money down in Welland on Friday, and a woman very nicely asked when we were coming back. I said that we were coming back on Tuesday. She said, "We appreciate your hard work." I was very flattered by that, and I said, "Ma'am, I don't work hard; trust me. You know who works hard?" I talk to my colleagues here at Queen's Park who say, "Oh, we work so hard." I say, "Show me your hands." Oh, soft, soft like Mr. Hudak's daughter's cheek; not a callus, not a scratch, not a scar. You know who works hard? The woman at the 7-Eleven who shows up for her 3 o'clock shift after working in the hotels in Niagara Falls from 6 in the morning through to 3 in the afternoon. That's who works hard. She does it for \$9 an hour. She's usually raising kids. And if she's working that hard, it's a pretty safe bet, a pretty good bet, that there's not a father in the household. When she's working that hard raising kids, she's got kids who don't have the parental support, the parental guidance and the parental companionship, let's say, going out to Girl Guide meetings or Boy Scout meetings, never mind—you don't go to minor hockey when you earn those sorts of wages because you simply can't afford the equipment. Soccer is a reasonably economic sport. Soccer is a strong sport down in Niagara, where I come from.

These kids, through no fault of their mothers, are also at risk. They don't have a mother at home making supper at 5 o'clock, because she's still working. They don't have a mother or a parent at home at 6:30 in the evening

helping with their homework, because she's still working. So they struggle along. If a kid has a learning disability, things like attention deficit disorder, in most of Ontario they don't have a mental health service that helps them deal with that, even if their mother had the time in her six- or seven-day-a-week work schedule to get that kid to a doctor, even if there was a doctor who was there to diagnose a kid and even if there weren't the huge waiting lists in places like the Niagara Centre for Youth Care.

But we can intervene effectively to prevent youth crime. We've got to start talking about family, and we've got to start talking about families that are living in decent housing. We've got to start talking about families that have enough time with each other so that that parent-child relationship can be nurtured and cultivated and so that the home is the base of the family, not the street. Just like where you come from, Speaker, or where I come from, city councils are under incredible pressure because of the failure to upload the download—10 years, now. Recreational facilities are being shut down. The fees to play baseball in the summertime are increasing.

I go to as many of the sea cadet, air cadet, army cadet and Boy Scout and Girl Guide events down in Welland and Niagara as I can. I recall—and I've had occasion to say this many, many times—as a lawyer, I had a very, very busy criminal practice and acted for a whole lot of young offenders, and I never had a kid who was an active participant in those organizations as a client. But that's not to say that they didn't perhaps from time to time, as I say, steal the Wrigley's chewing gum, but that was almost inevitably dealt with in a discretionary way, by a good cop who understood that kids do these things.

One of the other phenomena of the Young Offenders Act was that charges against young people increased because the Young Offenders Act in this country heralded a dividing line, a point in time when discretionary behaviour on the part of police officers—this isn't that long ago, when a cop, rather than laying a charge, would take a kid home to his or her parents or talk to the principal or the teachers at the school and try to find out what was going on, whether there was a problem that had to be addressed. But those days are long gone. Police are under pressure now to generate statistics and, quite frankly, to cover their butts. That means you lay charges, when at a time not that long ago police officers had far more discretion.

Then you've got young offender courts. I knew some of the best judges in the country, I'm sure of it—guys like Lloyd Budgell down in Welland and Wilma Scott—but with dockets three and four pages long. Here are skilled judges, hard-working judges, judges for whom I have the greatest respect, who are having to process people in a sausage-factory style. You've got probation officers who are harried and overworked because there simply aren't enough. Then you've got pre-sentence reports that are rushed and inadequate.

I used to drive the judges crazy because under the old Young Offenders Act, you could appeal to the judge to



have a psychiatric assessment done on a kid. I was criticized of overusing that provision, overusing that section. I did it without hesitation because here's an opportunity for the state, with all of its resources, to intervene in a kid's life, to find out if there's a sexual abuse problem, if there's a family violence problem, if there's a drinking or drug problem in the home, to find out if a kid has a learning disorder or attention deficit disorder, because it wasn't going to happen otherwise. But, as you know, the facilities to provide those tools are scarcer and scarcer, and waiting lists are longer and longer.

I'm not, by any stretch of the imagination as a New Democrat, talking about being easy on any offender. I'm a strong believer in those diversion programs. They can be very effective and do work. I'm a strong believer in enhanced police discretion. It's not quite germane, but there's that wacky story out of Mr. Rinaldi's area where a cop pulls over a guy smoking in a car who is, what, a teenager—

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** Twenty years old.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** —twenty years old, a young man—and he's going to bust him for smoking in the car because there's a 15-year-old in the car with him. Catch this: So they get out of the car, the cop is writing up this 20-year-old for smoking in the car—I presume it was tobacco—and here's the 15-year-old, who is purportedly the victim of the crime, pulling out a pack of cigarettes and lighting up a smoke while the cop is writing up the 20-year-old who was driving. Nuts. Good God.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** So what's your point?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** What's my point? Here's a cop who doesn't use very much discretion, does he, Mr. Rinaldi? And he's one of yours.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** He is abiding by the law.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I tell you, that is an incredible waste of police resources. That cop, as we speak, is being razed in some police detachment by his colleagues somewhere here in the province of Ontario. That cop is going to get those newspaper reports stuck to the front of his locker as long as the newspapers keep publishing it. That cop is going to acquire a nickname. I can't even begin to imagine what it would be, but knowing cops as I do, they're very creative.

I quite frankly think that we need more diversionary programs and more discretionary powers, but we also need the ability to intervene effectively in young people's lives. We also need to make sure that young people have families, homes, educations and the ability to aspire.

There's a concept in sociology called anomie. I just reflect on how many kids whom I acted for, including more than a few adults, for whom life was better in a detention facility than it was in their own homes. How do you persuade that kind of kid that it's in his or her interest not to commit crimes? When a kid has nothing and no ability of ever getting nothing, how harshly can we condemn him or her for boosting a bicycle, notwithstanding that a bicycle theft is—especially for kids who lose a bicycle, it's just a tragic thing, never mind a dog, as you read about recently.

1700

The one concern that I expressed to Ms. Horwath about this legislation is that under the correctional services act, MPPs have the statutory right to enter and examine any jail in the province—and it's a right that I exercised often, a couple of times involuntarily. But I think that's an incredibly important role. I hearken back to the days of Jim Renwick and others here in this Legislature—and Mr. McMeekin will recall this well—who spearheaded prison reform in this province, who were mocked in this chamber for raising concerns about the violence on young offenders at St. John's Training School in Uxbridge, young women and young men—true tragedies. Those of us who have been here for a while recall them being in the visitors' galleries while they were apologized to, and we saw the broken lives, the shattered lives. I think it's an incredibly important role for an MPP to play: to ensure that there's hands-on—I'm not talking about interfering in what happens in a facility, but the ability to enter a facility, just like you have, under the Education Act, the ability and power to enter a school in your riding. I'm not sure whether that is within the—it's certainly not in Bill 103. But it's my understanding that that power is not being accorded to MPPs, and I find that genuinely regrettable.

This bill was the simple proposition, effectively, of merging the two tiers of young offender corrections. I really wish that this province would have a lengthier and serious discussion about youth corrections across the board, about the facilities that are there, about the appropriateness of those facilities, about the auditing of those facilities. I wish we'd have a lengthy discussion about understanding who's in those facilities and why they're there and, in many respects, the absurdity of proportionality when it comes to a young offender sentence. A seven-day sentence is the sort of thing you give a repeat offender adult shoplifter or somebody who commits a common assault in a bar. It's not intended to provide a venue or a period of time in which there can be effective treatment and intervention.

I also have concerns about family and children's services in this province. I believe there's a great inconsistency from community to community, and it is my dear wish that family and children's services would be abolished and become a direct government service. It's an antiquated 19th-century proposition, Victorian in its design, where there's no political accountability, notwithstanding transfer payment monies from Ontario taxpayers supporting, for all intents, everything that they do. The serious shortage of child mental health services, including beds and treatment facilities, is one that's going to catch up with us.

Dr. Thoppil Abraham, who just retired as a psychiatrist down in Welland—a dear friend of mine—now works at the Hope Centre as a volunteer. It's a soup kitchen, and many of the people there have serious mental health problems. Thoppil Abraham does everything from fill out ODSP applications to provide opinions as to their eligibility as a disabled person, to doing some



sort of hands-on street psychiatric treatment. One of the things that Thoppil Abraham has repeated over and over, and his words have been proven true over and over again, is that especially when we're in this huge economic turmoil, people are losing jobs, and when people lose jobs, families break down. Kids drop out of high school, never mind university and college, because the level of despair mounts and becomes increasingly incapable of being reined in. And that means the demand for psychiatric services is compounded.

So as much as we need the 12 GO Transit parking lots that the Premier announced today, we need a major infusion into children's mental health services. Because like the Petri dish in a lab, we will be breeding, nurturing, cultivating kids who have so little respect for themselves that they have no respect for others, kids whose sole outlet is violence and who at some point will be incorrigible, beyond the point of recovery, and then you've got to lock people up for life, don't you? And if you want to be purely pragmatic about it, that's not a cheap proposition either. So you can pay now or pay later. I'd say that our investment in our young people should be now, and we need that debate, in addition to this modest debate, at a broad-based level across all three parties and across the province in short order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I was listening attentively to the member from Niagara Centre, and he got me to think about sometimes the messages our justice system sends out to young offenders or young people or people in general, the consequences of certain things or the paths you take.

For example, in my riding there's a park where men and boys come down and they play dominoes and they play cards. On Saturdays usually there's a guy who comes trying to support his family of four kids. He sells soup out of the back of a truck to make a few bucks—he does this every Saturday—and the guys playing dominoes will buy the soup from him for a buck or two. Wouldn't you know it? One day he gets a ticket for \$150 for selling the soup. Meanwhile, on the other side of the parking lot there's a guy selling dope and drugs. They're all laughing at him because they know the cop won't arrest them or give them a ticket for selling drugs, whereas the poor guy selling soup gets a \$150 ticket. I don't blame the police officer, because you know how difficult it is to get evidence on those drug dealers. You've got to have undercover people; you've got to have a whole record of surveillance and so forth. So the message really goes out to young people who are in the park watching this: The guy selling soup got the \$150 fine, so I'm not going to sell soup. I'm going to look at those other guys laughing in the bushes selling dope and nobody touches them—and they sit there every day selling dope.

Those are the kinds of messages we sometimes send. You know, young people are pretty perceptive. They see these things, they hear these things that take place, and

no wonder some of them say, "Hey, wait a minute now. Which way should I turn?" You certainly don't help these kids if you make it impossible for them to make a dollar selling soup.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm pleased to add a couple of comments to the, as always, interesting speech from the member from Welland on Bill 103.

We've been told by the government that this bill is more or less housekeeping, although it appears to be a little bit more than just housekeeping. It used to be that 12- to 15-year-olds were under one act dealing with younger kids, and the 16- and 17-year-olds were dealt with under the Ministry of Correctional Services Act. I do have some questions now when you're mixing 12-year-olds with 17-year-olds and about how that works out. Certainly if they are in the same youth detention facility, you could have a situation where the older youth are educating the younger youth, and not necessarily in the things that we would want them to learn. So I do have some questions for the government about how they maintain the separation between the youngest of that group and the oldest. I would be interested to hear what they have to say to do with that.

1710

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I thought the member from Welland put some very thoughtful comments on the record today regarding Bill 103. He raised a point that was very interesting about organizations that young people can belong to.

I just recently had the opportunity to be in Lakefield, Ontario, which is a community just north of Peterborough, to attend a joint meeting of the local Lakefield Cub and Scout troops. There were a number of young people there who were from single-parent-led families, and after the session had concluded, it was interesting, because some of the mothers would come by to pick up their young children and teenagers, to have a coffee and a doughnut, and you could see the smiles on their faces when they had the opportunity to have their children in that kind of framework, because the topic that evening—they asked me to come to make a short presentation on the role of an MPP, but beyond that, they were talking about the responsibilities of citizenship on that particular night. They were talking about the requirement to get their citizenship badges. It was interesting to see how the troop leader that night was engaging all the young people there to talk about the rights and responsibilities, and the whole concept notion about citizenship. You could see that framework. They were certainly given the opportunity, of course, to participate, and there was quite a dialogue going back and forth to really create that self-worth for that young person to talk about his or her citizenship and the obligations that one has.

The other thing, I think, that's been helpful—particularly the waiving of fees for our gymnasiums across



the province of Ontario to engage kids in basketball and soccer. I recall, when I was a city councillor, the opportunity to provide kids with that opportunity to be involved in organized sports.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

I'll return to the member for Welland, who has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Interesting input from all members, and it underscores my belief that we need a much broader-based discussion about youth in Ontario, youth crime and solutions to youth crime. Mr. Colle tells an incredibly powerful story.

Let's understand, we glamorize deviant behaviour. Tony Soprano is a television hero. That series, an incredibly popular series, was designed to make viewers sympathetic to Tony and his problems as he sat with his psychiatrist. Hollywood was making us fans of Tony Soprano. There's a whole element of Hollywood-driven popular music out there that literally glamorizes gun-fighting, abuse of women, drug-dealing, anti-cop-ism. Make no mistake about it, this is driven by commercial interests; this isn't artistic freedom. This is what's going to sell at that particular point in time. I think we should reflect on exactly this growing phenomenon of celebrating deviant behaviour instead of celebrating positive and mature behaviour.

Mr. Leal talks about Boy Scouts—air cadets, sea cadets. Those kids are under an incredible lot of peer pressure because it's not always cool to do what they're doing. These are teenage kids. It's very, in some quarters, uncool. So what have we done? Once again, we don't celebrate the positive contribution that all of us, especially young people, can make to their futures in the community, but we're glamorizing Tony Soprano, along with any other criminal television-types. That warrants reflection as well.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell:** Welcome back, everyone. I rise today—

*Interjection.*

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell:** And I mean it. I rise today to support Bill 103, but I wanted to give it a little bit of a different perspective, and I wanted to share a couple of experiences that I've had.

I know that many of the members are aware that we have the Bluewater youth detention centre located in my riding. I've had a number of opportunities to go on-site. One of the days that I wanted to share with all of the House and those who are listening today was when I was invited to the Duke of Edinburgh's Awards day. I can tell you that this is a day that the residents of the Bluewater detention centre certainly celebrate.

Why do they celebrate this awards day? Here's how it works for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. They have the opportunity to sign up. There are different levels of awards, so they pick where they want to start and then they begin the process of going for the different levels.

All of them are encouraged to come forward and sign up for these awards. When the MP and the MPP of the riding show up, it gives them the opportunity to talk about the work that was involved at each level of the awards. One of the things that I certainly have learned over the years is that, more than just the family, it takes a community to raise all of our children.

When I think about the skills that they learn—I'll just give you an example, because I know the members are anxious to hear about some examples. One of the things that they did was survival. They were given limited water, limited food, and then they were taken out—it's a large property—and they had to provide the skills to keep themselves of sound mind and body while they were under this endurance test. They had to use all the skills they had been taught, such as starting a fire, setting up a tent, and actually preparing food over this fire. To listen to all of them talk about it, they were so excited that they were learning these skills, because, as you know, often the youth who come to the detention centre located in my riding come from larger urban areas, so it's a wonderful learning experience for them. While they are learning, they're also learning a multitude of skill sets, they're learning leadership, and they are learning the ability to retain all of the knowledge and how to apply it.

I think one of the most important things we can do is teach our children adaptability to the environment that they are in and then provide the skill sets they need to get on in their lives, and also the understanding that education is such a key component of that. So I really do want to congratulate, first of all, the Duke of Edinburgh for recognizing the need and then coming forward with a program like this.

I wanted to share with you a young man who is 18 years old, and the skills that he learned. I really want to recognize all of the work that he did to get to that level and to congratulate him. But I wanted to also share with you a young man who would be 20 or 21 years old. He now is at the university. He came into the detention centre and picked up the educational component that he needed to go on into posts-secondary and now is registered in post-secondary. So even within the environment of the justice system, we have to give the tools to those who choose to turn their back on crime.

When we talk about communities, what can we do as community members to ensure that our children have a foundation, that they can thrive and grow in a community while being very respectful of other community members, if in fact the life that they have chosen is a pathway of crime? How should that be dealt with?

When we think about the work that has been done on the poverty committee in developing the strategy, and we look at the many components that must come forward in a comprehensive strategy to ensure that that is a strong foundation to grow on, it really is what we need in every community. There certainly will be challenges for all of that to come together, especially given today's economy, but we look at what we can do with our children, for our children. It really is important. The work that will happen



in Bill 103 is just another piece of the puzzle that will ensure that our children have a very comprehensive strategy going forward.

1720

I know the member from Welland always likes to share a little story about himself, about what he was the leader of, so I'm going to share a little story about myself and the work that I've done with children over the years. I'm sure that you'll be anxious to know this: I'm what I would refer to as an old Girl Guide leader. I also was a Pathfinder leader, and I've worked with young girls for, oh, longer than I would want to acknowledge, because I'm just 29 and holding—so it was certainly a long time. But one of the things that we certainly taught the young ladies was a strong sense of community, how important their role is within the community and what their citizenship means: respect for themselves, first and foremost; respect for others; and respect for the community they live within, and how, then, they can thrive.

I think about all the young ladies over the years whom I had the privilege to work with. What they have gone on to become really is something to see. Sometimes when you say things like this, it sounds a bit trite, but one of the things that we always said in Girl Guides was, "You always leave a place better than when you found it." It is something that I believe the young ladies who went through have certainly demonstrated in the latter part of their lives and will continue to do as they go forward.

I'll go back to Bill 103. I support it because I believe that it is important to focus on a different strategy from ages 12 to 17 and then to identify the tools that would be most successful in helping our young people who choose to turn their backs on crime and to develop that strategy, making sure that we've done everything we can do to move them forward.

I'm very disappointed that I don't have as much time as I had hoped for. We could have gotten into when I taught swimming lessons for a number of years. I know that the members would be anxious to hear about how we did leadership and a team approach. One thing I do want to say to those who are listening is that government can put policies in place, we can do a lot of things—we have a number of tools to work with—but at the end of the day, it's a community that must bring about change for all of us, a change of attitude, and all of us can make a difference in young people's lives today.

I always like to end with my old Girl Guide saying: "We must leave the place better than we found it." If our young people take that to heart and we ensure that they have the tools to work with, I'm sure Bill 103 will be successful.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I just wanted to comment briefly on the remarks of my colleague from Huron-Bruce and her very personal input on this bill, because I think it has made us reflect a bit about why we need to look at this bill in its narrow context but also in its wider context, the wider context being that our young people do need some

appreciation at times. As much as they need discipline, the appreciation comes from the fact—I think the member from Welland mentioned it. I don't know the statistic exactly, but I think it's 50% of the inmates in juvenile detention institutions have either dyslexia, ADD—attention deficit disorder—or some kind of abusive history in their family. Some of them have medical conditions that have never been diagnosed, like hearing problems, so they basically are in there because they couldn't adapt to the normal classroom; the home setting was not appropriate. And yet they end up in that very horrible situation, the detention centres. If we don't give them any help, then they're essentially condemned to a horrible, horrible future.

I just think that sometimes we have to stop and reflect on that, and that's why it's so important to give young people opportunities to get involved in community work and have some self-esteem, some sense of worth, which is sometimes difficult. As we've said around here, sometimes parents are not able to do that, whether it's one parent at home or a parent with three jobs; it's not unusual—parents or grandparents that raise children.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

I'll return to the member for Huron-Bruce, if she chooses to reply.

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell:** I want to thank the member from Eglinton-Lawrence for his kind comments.

I know that there has been a great deal of discussion on this bill, and I know that there will be, going forward, because the members of the House, all members, all sides, know how important this work is, and specifically, in dealing with our youth, our young people, what a difference there will be in this province if we get this just right.

So we recognize that Bill 103, the poverty strategy coming forward, will be many comprehensive policies that are knit together that will provide the foundation for our young people. We also know the commitments that we have made to post-secondary and our secondary, elementary—those are also tools that are available for our young people. But it's about making sure that all of our young people have opportunities.

*Interruption.*

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell:** And there someone's calling to let me know that they have some opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak to Bill 103.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

Government House leader.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I move adjournment of the debate at this time.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Third reading debate adjourned.*

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I move adjournment of the House at this time.



**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1729.*

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
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Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
<b>Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Economic Development / Ministre du Développement économique
<b>Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
<b>Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
<b>Carroll, Hon. / L'hon. M. Aileen (LIB)</b>	Barrie	Minister of Culture / Ministre de la Culture
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
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Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
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Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
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<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	Windsor–Tecumseh	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
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Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
		Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu



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Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
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<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
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Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
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Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Murdoch, Bill (IND)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)</b>	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
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		Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
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Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London—Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland—Quinte West	
Runciman, Robert W. (PC)	Leeds—Grenville	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)</b>	Nipissing	Minister of Tourism / Ministre du Tourisme
		Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
<b>Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Deputy Premier / Vice-premier ministre
		Minister of Energy and Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Infrastructure
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton—Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
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## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

### Health care

Mrs. Joyce Savoline ..... 4824

### Ontario budget

Mr. Reza Moridi ..... 4824

### Termination and severance payments

Mr. Norman W. Sterling ..... 4824

### Teachers

Mr. Rosario Marchese ..... 4825

### Mary Welsh

Mr. Dave Levac ..... 4825

### Premier of Ontario

Mr. Ted Chudleigh ..... 4825

### Cyclone Manufacturing

Mr. Bob Delaney ..... 4825

### Kindness Week

Mr. Yasir Naqvi ..... 4826

### Michael Freeman

Mr. Jeff Leal ..... 4826

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES / RAPPORTS DES COMITÉS

### Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Mr. Norman W. Sterling ..... 4826

Debate adjourned ..... 4826

### Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Mr. Norman W. Sterling ..... 4827

Debate adjourned ..... 4827

## MOTIONS

### Private members' public business

Hon. Monique M. Smith ..... 4827

Motion agreed to ..... 4827

## PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

### Health care

Mr. Robert Bailey ..... 4827

### Bathurst Heights Adult Learning Centre

Mr. Mike Colle ..... 4827

### Tuition

Mr. Jim Wilson ..... 4828

### Child custody

Mr. Jim Brownell ..... 4828

### Hospital funding

Mr. Norm Miller ..... 4828

### Hospital funding

Mr. Bob Delaney ..... 4829

### Assistance to farmers

Mr. Ernie Hardeman ..... 4829

### Federal-provincial fiscal policies

Mr. Bill Mauro ..... 4829

### Child care

Mr. John O'Toole ..... 4829

### Tom Longboat

Mr. Mike Colle ..... 4830

### Sales tax

Mr. Toby Barrett ..... 4830

### Pope John Paul II

Mr. Bob Delaney ..... 4830

### Sales tax

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette ..... 4830

### Assistance to farmers

Mr. Ernie Hardeman ..... 4830

## ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

### Child and Family Services Statute Law Amendment Act, 2009, Bill 103, Ms. Matthews / Loi de 2009 modifiant des lois en ce qui concerne les services à l'enfance et à la famille, projet de loi 103, Mme Matthews

Hon. Deborah Matthews ..... 4831

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel ..... 4832

Mr. Tim Hudak ..... 4834

Hon. Jim Watson ..... 4834

Mr. Peter Kormos ..... 4834

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel ..... 4835

Mrs. Julia Munro ..... 4835

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel ..... 4837

Mr. Tim Hudak ..... 4837

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti ..... 4837

Mrs. Julia Munro ..... 4838

Mr. Peter Kormos ..... 4838

Mr. Mike Colle ..... 4842

Mr. Norm Miller ..... 4842

Mr. Jeff Leal ..... 4842

Mr. Peter Kormos ..... 4843

Mrs. Carol Mitchell ..... 4843

Mr. Mike Colle ..... 4844

Mrs. Carol Mitchell ..... 4844

Third reading debate adjourned ..... 4844

# CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Tuesday 17 February 2009 / Mardi 17 février 2009

## ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

<b>Regulated Health Professions Amendment Act, 2009, Bill 141, Mr. Caplan / Loi de 2009 modifiant la Loi sur les professions de la santé réglementées, projet de loi 141, M. Caplan</b>	
Hon. Monique M. Smith .....	4811
Mr. Bas Balkissoon .....	4811
Mr. Norm Miller .....	4811
Mr. Rosario Marchese .....	4812
Mr. Mike Colle .....	4812
Mr. Randy Hillier .....	4812
Mr. Bas Balkissoon .....	4812
Second reading debate adjourned .....	4813
<b>Use of paper in the House</b>	
The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters) .....	4813
<b>Premier's attendance</b>	
Mr. Robert W. Runciman .....	4813
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	4813

## ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

<b>Ontario economy</b>	
Mr. Robert W. Runciman .....	4813
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	4813
<b>Ontario budget</b>	
Mr. Tim Hudak .....	4814
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	4814
<b>Automotive industry</b>	
Mr. Howard Hampton .....	4815
Hon. Michael Bryant .....	4815
<b>Automotive industry</b>	
Mr. Howard Hampton .....	4816
Hon. Michael Bryant .....	4816
<b>Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp.</b>	
Mr. Frank Klees .....	4817
Hon. George Smitherman .....	4817
<b>Manufacturing jobs</b>	
Mr. Paul Miller .....	4818
Hon. Michael Bryant .....	4818
<b>Student assistance</b>	
Mrs. Laura Albanese .....	4818
Hon. John Milloy .....	4818
<b>Health care</b>	
Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer .....	4819
Hon. David Caplan .....	4819

## Ontario disability support program

Mr. Michael Prue .....	4820
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	4820

## Teachers' collective bargaining

Mr. Bob Delaney .....	4820
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne .....	4820

## Health care

Mr. Robert Bailey .....	4821
Hon. David Caplan .....	4821

## Ministry of the Attorney General

Mr. Peter Kormos .....	4821
Hon. Christopher Bentley .....	4821

## Public transit

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn .....	4822
Hon. George Smitherman .....	4822
Hon. James J. Bradley .....	4822

## Government regulations

Mrs. Joyce Savoline .....	4822
Hon. Ted McMeekin .....	4822

## Tourism

Mr. Paul Miller .....	4823
Hon. Monique M. Smith .....	4823

## Use of question period

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette .....	4823
Hon. George Smitherman .....	4823
The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters) .....	4823

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Hon. Christopher Bentley .....	4823
Mr. Bill Mauro .....	4823

## Royal assent / Sanction royale

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters) .....	4824
---------------------------------------	------

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Yasir Naqvi .....	4824
Mr. Jim Brownell .....	4824

*Continued on inside back cover*



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Première session, 39<sup>e</sup> législature

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# Journal des débats (Hansard)



Wednesday 18 February 2009

Mercredi 18 février 2009

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk  
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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 18 February 2009

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 18 février 2009

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the non-denominational prayer.

*Prayers.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### REGULATED HEALTH PROFESSIONS AMENDMENT ACT, 2009

### LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES PROFESSIONS DE LA SANTÉ RÉGLEMENTÉES

Resuming the debate adjourned on February 17, 2009, on the motion for second reading of Bill 141, An Act to amend the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 / *Projet de loi 141, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1991 sur les professions de la santé réglementées.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further debate?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Thank you very much. I was locked out of the House, so I just came in.

I'm happy to rise today to speak to Bill 141, the Regulated Health Professions Amendment Act. There is no question that as health care consumers and health care providers, there is no greater objective than ensuring patient safety at all times. In fact, this is the express purpose of the Regulated Health Professions Act.

Since it was introduced in 1991, the purpose has been and remains to protect the public from unqualified, incompetent or otherwise unfit practitioners. The bill also encouraged the provision of high quality care. It allows the public the freedom to choose safe health care providers and it promotes flexibility in the role of health professionals to ensure maximum efficiencies of the health care system. This is what the Regulated Health Professions Act is all about, and we are about to modify it with Bill 141.

As medical procedures and the medical profession change over time, it is imperative that both the regulatory college as well as the province adjust to these changes and address any issue that could affect patient safety.

The bill before us today is, in part, a response to a tragedy that cost a young Toronto woman her life. In September 2007, Krista Stryland, a Toronto real estate agent, a 32-year-old mother, underwent a routine liposuction procedure in an out-of-hospital facility. Following

the surgery, she went into cardiac arrest and, tragically, she died. The physician who performed Mrs. Stryland's liposuction was not formally trained in plastic surgery.

Plastic surgeons must have five years of specialized training. They must pass national exams and be certified as specialists in plastic surgery by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. The physician who performed Mrs. Stryland's surgery had no hospital privileges. He was a general practitioner, better known to most as a family physician. Mrs. Stryland's untimely death was a wake-up call to the province, to the college and to us all that we must take a good look at the current system of regulations surrounding cosmetic surgery.

It is a great tragedy that nothing was done sooner and nothing was done to prevent this death, because dating back to 1989, a full 20 years before, a 44-year-old woman from Unionville died after undergoing cosmetic surgery. There was an inquest into her death and recommendations for greater regulation of cosmetic surgery were made at the time. That was 20 years ago. Unfortunately, there were few regulatory changes between the tragic death in 1989 and the one that I was just talking about that occurred in 2007.

Today, we have an opportunity to take the first step, although a tiny one, in closing this gap in oversight and patient safety. While there is no question that Bill 141 is an important step, it is also a small step. That is why we are looking forward to the conversation that is beginning today about how this bill could be pushed further and what next steps are needed to more fully protect Ontarians. This conversation affects us all and must be shared with Ontarians at large.

Some might say that cosmetic surgery is the wild west of medical practice. It is not true only in Ontario, but around the world. There have been deaths reported from Vietnam to Australia, from Thailand to the United Arab Emirates. It is likely no surprise to anyone here that we live in a world obsessed with beauty and the constant drive for perfection. Cosmetic surgery is something that more and more people are turning to as it becomes increasingly affordable and socially acceptable. But it remains surgery, with all of the dangers associated with such a procedure. It is the obligation of both the government and the regulatory colleges to understand these trends, keep current with them and ensure that safety is a primary concern of any cosmetic procedure.

According to the CPSO survey, cosmetic surgery procedures climbed at an alarming rate—if you ask me—of 150% between 2002 and 2006. Toronto is the sixth-biggest market for cosmetic surgery in North America—



right here. That means there are an awful lot of people undergoing these types of procedures that, like every other invasive surgery, are complex and always come with risks. It is these patients who count on the college and on us, on the province, to ensure their protection and their safety. Following the tragic death of Mrs. Stryland, the College of Physicians and Surgeons moved quickly to create regulatory changes that would prevent a further tragedy like this. The College of Physicians and Surgeons recognized that the medical community had not kept pace with the expanding field of cosmetic surgery and that patient safety in Ontario was being compromised. They recognized the need to better monitor cosmetic surgery in Ontario. I guess one has to say that recognizing that you have a problem is the first step in trying to fix it, so I commend the college for taking those actions.

0910

CPSO started by conducting a survey of more than 2,400 of its members, asking if they had expanded their practice to include cosmetic and anaesthetic procedures without having obtained proper training—quite a daring ask, I might say. They were basically asking whether physicians were advertising themselves as cosmetic surgeons without informing their patients that they were not formally trained and qualified to perform those surgeries. The result of the survey was revealing. There were, indeed, physicians across the province of Ontario who were performing those procedures and they were not adequately trained.

Following the results of this survey, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario moved on changes to fill in some of the gaps that they identified. For example, the college has now changed its policy of voluntary self-reporting, which resulted in some physicians, but not all of them, reporting and undergoing the training, supervision and assessment required by the policy.

In October 2007, the college made it mandatory for all of its members to submit a detailed account of the cosmetic procedures they were providing to their patients. That was new. Here again, kudos to the college. As well, a regulation will soon be forthcoming to limit the use of specialist titles such as “cosmetic surgeon” only to physicians who have received the proper training to safely conduct those procedures. The details of this policy change are still under way, and while we support a well-thought-out strategy, we urge both the college and the province to move as quickly as possible, because hundreds of people in Ontario are receiving those types of procedures right now, not always from qualified plastic surgeons.

The details of this could have potential patient impact. Patients have the right to a system and to terminology that clearly distinguishes between physicians with different training levels and different specialties. The thought that a patient would think that a physician has the kind of training and experience in a specific medical procedure when they do not is a reason to move as quickly as possible. As was the case, the physician was a family physician—a general practitioner, if you want—but let it

be known that he could perform cosmetic surgery and let it be known that he was a cosmetic surgeon, when in fact he was not. The thought was wrong.

From all of this work that the CPSO completed following the tragic death of Mrs. Stryland, the college submitted recommendations to the Ministry of Health that have formed the basis of Bill 141, the bill that we are talking about today. I must note that the college submitted a number of regulations and bylaw amendments to the ministry in March 2008 and it has taken nine months for the government to come back with this small amendment—not exactly the type of speed that we would have liked, but, regardless, there is no question that the bill before us today is a very important first step when it comes to protecting patient safety.

Many of the cosmetic procedures occurring in this province are occurring in clinical settings that are outside of hospitals, with very few regulations. Without this bill, the college has no right to go into these practices and directly observe physicians. This was one of the primary gaps identified by the college in the Regulated Health Professions Act and was a limit to the college’s ability to directly observe their members in practice.

If you think about it, this is a rather serious gap when it comes to medical care. For professions like law or accounting, it is likely that virtually every major decision, and perhaps even the thought process of how a decision was made, is recorded on paper. If you have a question as to why your accountant came to the conclusion they presented to you, they will likely be able to walk you through each figure and column as they have recorded it. Well, this is not the same when it comes to medicine, and especially not the same when it comes to surgery—and, I would add, cosmetic surgery.

Surgery is hands-on and, I would say, as much an art as it is a science, relying on sometimes split-second decision-making, a type of thought process that may not be so obvious to an external person looking on. Bill 141 lays the groundwork for observing of the members, but merely observing physicians may not be enough in some situations. That is why the CPSO, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, has highlighted the need to amend Bill 141 and include a provision that will allow the college to interview physicians about their practice and any concerns that have arisen following the observations. The ability to interview a physician may make all the difference in clarifying whether the physician or the surgeon fully understands the implications of their practice or the surgical procedure and could help identify any gaps in knowledge before an accident happens. As we’ve seen, some of those accidents may have horrific consequences for the patients.

There is a second issue that this bill does not address. Bill 141 could be more effective if the college was permitted to directly observe physicians wherever they practise. Currently, the scope of the observation is tied to the facility rather than the procedure or the physician. Other provinces, such as Alberta and British Columbia, have moved faster on recognizing the importance of



extensive monitoring. In these provinces, all surgeons and the surgical facilities they operate in must be licensed for each and every one of the procedures that they perform. This is the kind of oversight that may prove effective in preventing any further tragedies like we have seen here in Ontario.

This is the kind of discussion that needs to happen around patient safety and emerging areas of practice. This bill needs input from the regulatory college, from Ontario patients, from the medical schools and from all of the stakeholder groups out there so that we can get it right, protect the patients and avoid any future tragedies.

New Democrats strongly believe in oversight at our health care facilities. We believe that Ontarians deserve a place to turn to when something goes wrong for them or for a loved one across the medical system, or any other problems that they may encounter. There is perhaps no more important an area of oversight of issues and services than the one that affects our health and our well-being.

It would seem that this government has kind of an aversion to oversight, and this concerns us. New Democrats know that oversight is something we need to embrace and push for. That transparency is essential when it comes to good-quality health care and good health issues. This is why we have been pushing for Ombudsman oversight of this province's hospitals and long-term-care facilities in private members' bills, in question period and across the business of this House on a weekly basis. Ombudsman André Marin has pushed to have his role as Ontario's independent public watchdog expanded to include hospitals and long-term-care homes. As Ombudsman André Marin himself stated, "Ontario is the only province in Canada whose Ombudsman does not have a mandate to oversee hospitals," despite Mr. Marin's office receiving many serious complaints about hospitals every year that he cannot investigate. Actually, in 2007 a total of 228 complaints about hospitals were received by the Ombudsman's office, but he does not have the mandate to investigate them.

It is clear that today we have another issue of oversight in front of us, and today we actually have an opportunity to put the appropriate structure in place to avoid future mistakes and needless deaths. I urge the ministry to continue working with all health regulatory colleges to make sure that proper safety standards are in place for all high-risk procedures, not just cosmetic surgery. The work done by the CPSO is a step in the right direction, and we strongly encourage this government to adopt the amendment and regulatory changes as fast as possible.

**0920**  
New Democrats think this is a conversation that needs to be had with Ontarians at large. We need their input on the type of changes and transparency they want to see to ensure a safe medical system, including cosmetic and anaesthetic procedures. I look forward to seeing the ministry act swiftly to strengthen patient safety so that all Ontarians have confidence in our health care system, and I look forward to the actions that will be generated out of our conversations today.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** I'm pleased to rise in support of Bill 141, An Act to amend the Regulated Health Professions Act.

This amendment is all about arming our health regulatory colleges with the tools they need to further Ontario's patient safety agenda. This is clearly extremely important to the McGuinty government, and we're taking steps in a prudent, incremental fashion to ensure that patient safety is paramount. So we've moved on a number of fronts.

In July 2008, an amended regulation of the Public Hospitals Act was enacted to require hospitals to disclose to patients and their families any critical event that resulted in serious injury or death. In September 2008, we started full public reporting on eight patient safety indicators, including C. difficile, as part of a comprehensive plan to create an unprecedented level of transparency in Ontario's hospitals.

In the course of the debate today and yesterday, there are some comments that perhaps there is excessive regulation in Ontario. In this particular case, I think it's clear that the number one reason for regulation is the health and safety of Ontarians—not for us the careless slashing of regulations such as the previous government pursued, where they privatized labs, and medical officers of health no longer received reports of water quality in this province, which led, and was a contributing factor, to the tragedy in Walkerton. We're taking a careful, prudent approach to both looking at unnecessary regulation and ensuring that we have strong regulation to promote and preserve the health and safety of our residents.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It's always good to hear the member from Nickel Belt, the critic for the NDP. I think she is very committed to the file. But I'm very interested, as well, in the comments in a few moments by our critic from Kitchener-Waterloo.

Bill 141 is a very small bill; in fact, it really has one paragraph. I'm quite disappointed, actually: If you read the purpose clause, it says, "... is amended to permit health colleges to make regulations providing for the direct observation of members in their practices."

I know there has been a report filed with the Ministry of Health by many of the participants under the Regulated Health Professions Act, and they're waiting for other, I would say, more comprehensive changes to allow patient choices in the health care field.

Just recently, I was at the optometrist's in my riding and they were asking me, for the second or third time, about a bill that was passed but the regulations have not yet been set for optometrists to prescribe TPAs—topical medications. Now, that would actually be more convenient for the optometrist, when trained and approved by their college, as well as for the patient. The patient wouldn't then have to go, as they have to today, to a general practitioner, who literally wouldn't have all that much training on the eye and some of the medications to



deal with glaucoma and other things, and yet the GP can issue the prescription. With those kinds of changes, which make it more convenient and more professional, using the services of other professionals like pharmacists, nutritionists, psychologists and all the other practitioners under the Regulated Health Professions Act, I think this bill would have some substance to it. But once again, we have a government with no plan. This bill will be supported by us and I don't know why it's on the table this morning.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**M. Gilles Bisson:** Ça me fait plaisir de commenter ces commentaires de la part de ma collègue M<sup>me</sup> Gélinas. Je pense qu'elle a bien fait le point que beaucoup d'ouvrage a été fait par cette législature faisant affaire avec toute la question de s'assurer que les chirurgies faites par les chirurgiens de la province sont faites d'une manière transparente. On sait que, si tu rentres au bureau du médecin et tu te fais référer pour une chirurgie, à la fin de la journée tu veux savoir qu'il y a une qualité, une qualification, et que la personne est compétente pour faire ce qu'il y a à faire envers les chirurgies.

C'est déjà le cas dans les hôpitaux, comme on le sait. Il y a déjà la situation où un collègue peut aller visiter les hôpitaux pour voir ce qui se passe pour s'assurer que la qualité est là, et que la formation est en effet ce dont on a besoin pour être capable d'aller en avant avec les chirurgies d'une manière efficace et sûre. Mais il y avait toujours le problème avec ce qui se passe dans les cliniques privées.

Cet amendement regarde à donner aux collèges les mêmes droits qu'on a déjà en place pour ceux qui font des chirurgies dans des institutions publiques. C'est un pas important. Pourquoi? Parce qu'on sait qu'il y a eu beaucoup d'occasions où des personnes qui sont médecins ont décidé d'ouvrir une branche de pratique, on va dire, avec les chirurgies de maquillage—« face surgery »; des fois on ne trouve pas les termes assez faciles. Mais quand ça vient aux chirurgies de figure etc., il y a eu certaines occasions où les personnes ont eu des complications faisant affaire avec leur chirurgie. Donc, on a besoin d'avoir un meilleur régime en place pour s'assurer d'avoir une qualité: premièrement, que les médecins qui décident d'aller dans cette branche-là de la médecine sont qualifiés; et deuxièmement, s'ils sont qualifiés, d'avoir l'habileté de se faire vérifier par le collège des chirurgiens pour s'assurer que l'ouvrage qui est fait, en effet, est sûr. C'est un amendement qui fait du bon sens, et on prend plaisir à voir ce projet de loi aller en avant.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments? Further debate? Oh, excuse me. Member for Nickel Belt, you have two minutes to respond.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I'd like to thank the member from Oak Ridges—Markham for her comments. Certainly, I agree with what she said: that it is an important step in the right direction and it would lead to better safety for patients who undergo cosmetic surgery by ensuring that

the physicians who perform those surgeries are properly trained and that their college has an opportunity to check that training.

I also support the member from Durham when he says that although this bill takes us a small step in the direction of patient safety, we need more comprehensive reforms to the health professions act. He talked about examples where different health professionals and the public of Ontario would benefit from an expansion in their scopes of practice. I hope that those changes will be coming to this House shortly, if they need to come to the House, or the changes will be done to the health practitioners act in order to allow—he talked about optometrists, but there are also nurse practitioners, pharmacists, physiotherapists and a lot of other regulated health professionals who would benefit from an expansion of their scope of practice that would allow them to better serve the people of Ontario.

Finalement, j'aimerais remercier mon collègue de Timmins—Baie James pour ses commentaires. Certainement, on peut voir qu'il a à cœur la sécurité des gens de l'Ontario. Lorsqu'un médecin offre de la chirurgie cosmétique mais n'a pas eu la formation pour le faire, on met les clients à risque. Ses commentaires allaient dans le sens que le parti néo-démocratique veut que notre système de santé soit aussi sécuritaire que possible.

0930

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. Now we're ready for further debate.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I'm very pleased to rise on behalf of the Progressive Conservative Party to respond to this legislation, which is entitled the Regulated Health Professions Amendment Act, 2008, and which we of course support. We do have some amendments that we hope the government will consider at this time. When the legislation is open is the time to make sure that the legislation becomes the best it possibly can be.

Once this bill is passed, it will give Ontario's 23 health regulatory colleges new powers to conduct inspections in settings that are currently unregulated. The changes would allow a regulatory college, such as the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, to directly observe a health professional's practice and watch a procedure being performed. Of course, much of the reason for the legislation having been introduced is the result of a Toronto Star investigation over the past two years that documented "a regulatory black hole" surrounding Ontario's growing cosmetic surgery industry.

I think we're all familiar with the September 2007 tragedy that happened to Krista Stryland, a Toronto real estate agent and a 32-year-old mother. She went to her doctor's office to undergo a routine liposuction treatment and, tragically, she did not survive. She died of cardiac arrest. Subsequently, the court documents showed that she had 23 incisions that had been made in six parts of her body during one surgical session. Sadly, this case is but one of several high-profile deaths which have put a negative spotlight on cosmetic surgery. Another example is in 2004. We have TV producer Micheline Charest



dying after she underwent a facelift and breast augmentation. In 2007, Olivia Goldsmith, author of the book *The First Wives Club*, also died while undergoing cosmetic surgery.

Regrettably, these are some of the situations that people find themselves in, so we need to strictly regulate those who are performing cosmetic surgery, as they do in other Canadian provinces such as Alberta and British Columbia. Unfortunately, we have been slower in Ontario to take action.

If you take a look at Alberta and British Columbia, all the surgeons and the surgical facilities must be licensed for each procedure they perform. As well—and I think this is extremely important—doctors cannot advertise themselves as cosmetic surgeons without holding a surgical specialty. We know that is a problem in this province as well. So in 2008, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario proposed regulatory changes that would prevent doctors from calling themselves “cosmetic surgeons,” a term applied to doctors who are not plastic surgeons and who perform procedures including facelifts, tummy tucks and liposuction. I would like to point out that this term is not formally recognized by licensing bodies. According to the CPSO’s website, the college, “since April 2007 ... has undertaken a number of initiatives, in addition to the proposed regulations on out-of-hospital facilities and use of specialist titles that are intended to improve patient safety.” Really, that’s what this bill is all about—the need for us here to ensure that the lives of the public are protected.

They go on to say on their website that they have done the following: They’ve passed a policy which requires doctors to report changes in their scope of practice—for example, if they suddenly decide they are going to call themselves a cosmetic surgeon without holding any surgical specialty. They have produced an information fact sheet to provide to Ontarians with important information they should consider before deciding to have cosmetic procedures. You know, it’s always important that people are totally familiar with what is involved when they are undergoing surgery of any kind, but particularly this type of surgery. As well, it includes asking all doctors who perform cosmetic procedures to give the CPSO information about their practice and their training, to ensure that doctors are only practising in areas where they have the necessary knowledge, skill and training.

In September 2008, the Ontario Supreme Court ruled that the CPSO has the authority to force a health professional to submit to an interview and observation by an investigator. According to the *Globe and Mail* article on September 29, 2008, this decision “will push forward the stalled CPSO investigations of a handful of doctors, launched” after the death of Ms. Stryland. “With hundreds of family doctors performing cosmetic surgery in Ontario, the court’s decision has set an important precedent.”

The CPSO is trying to continue to do everything it can, in its power, to protect patient safety. The legislation that we’re talking about today should give regulatory

bodies like the CPSO more control over monitoring their members for the purpose of protecting the public.

When this legislation was introduced last year, I had indicated that we were quite interested in hearing what the colleges had to say about the legislation and also what the public had to say about this legislation. For the benefit of people who are watching today, I just want to share some of the feedback we have received since this bill was introduced.

“Bill 141 is a good first step”—and I emphasize “first”—“to improving patient safety at out-of-hospital facilities.” We are talking here, of course, about places like these cosmetic surgery clinics. “However, ensuring the safety of patients in all settings across Ontario is of even greater concern.” If we’re going to do that, and I hope the Minister of Health and his staff are listening, “This will require legislative amendments that will explicitly codify a college’s investigatory powers to ensure that physicians are meeting expected standards of practice.”

We also have to remember—and this is feedback we received—that “full patient safety requires that a good facilities inspection system be complemented by an effective investigation system to provide adequate oversight of the health professionals that work at health care facilities.

“In addition to what is contained in Bill 141, amendments to the Health Professions Procedural Code (Schedule 2 of the RHPA) are needed to clarify the authority of health college investigators and confirm that they have the power to compel members to provide interviews and to observe members perform procedures.

“These amendments” to this bill “are needed because the colleges”—at least one—“are currently involved in litigation regarding the extent of their investigators’ powers under the HPPC (i.e., requiring interviews and observing performance of procedures). The final outcome of this litigation will likely not be known for many months, if not years.

“While this legal challenge is contested at various levels of the court, the tenor of the investigations process is changing and some regulated health care professionals are taking a more adversarial stance.” As a result, you have a college “facing difficulties in some serious investigations,” and regrettably, the outcome is that we compromise patient safety. That’s why the Ministry of Health and the McGuinty government need to consider making amendments to this bill at a time when the legislation is open.

0940

If we take a look at interview powers, we know that “Interviews are an essential tool that must be available to investigators to conduct a meaningful investigation. Interviews are a usual and accepted manner of evaluating medical knowledge and judgment. The medical chart tells only one part of the story; the remainder needs to come from ... the health care provider. Whether care is simply poorly charted or is in fact poorly provided can often only be told from an interview.”



By the way, most of this information that we have received concerning necessary amendments to Bill 141 comes from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario.

They go on to talk about observation powers: "In ... limited cases, a college investigator will need to observe a member perform a procedure or technique—for example, members who perform procedures but have not completed a formal surgical residency program.

"As surgery is a manual discipline, direct observation of the manual skills of the physician is important in order to thoroughly assess or examine the physician's surgical practice.

"A medical investigator will often be unable to draw any meaningful conclusion unless he or she is able to observe the member perform the procedure. It is through direct observation that an investigator can best assess the level of skill, knowledge and judgment of a surgeon."

So I hope that the ministry and the minister will take a look at making amendments to Bill 141 "to include HPPC amendments that codify these investigatory powers of health colleges to ensure public safety."

I hope, as well, that the government will listen very closely and consider all of the recommendations that have been put forward by Ontario's 23 regulatory bodies. As I well know, having served as Minister of Health, the time to make the changes that are going to fully protect the public should occur when the act is open. We know it will probably be a long time before it is opened again, so we must make all the necessary changes to help protect the safety of Ontarians.

Finally, I don't think anybody disagrees with this legislation. I would simply encourage the government to act quickly in order to ensure that Bill 141, with its amendments, passes as quickly as possible in order that we can protect public safety.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I listened intently to the comments and it's fairly clear that there is strong support for this move in this direction on all sides of the Legislature. I think it speaks to, far more often than people realize, a fair amount of agreement in regard to what needs to be done for the public good. Just for the record, I think people often look at this Legislature and say, "Oh my God, they're in there fighting like a bunch of kids. They can't get along. If only they could work together." I think this is an example where we may not agree entirely with what the government has done as far as their amendments—and that's for committee—but that's the legislative process. Generally the direction being taken is something that I think we can all support.

As a member of the New Democratic caucus, we were actually the government that first came in with the Regulated Health Professions Act in the early 1990s. Since then, we've had to find ways to learn and to strengthen and to make sure that we put in place the safeguards necessary to protect the public when it comes to practices by surgeons and physicians in this province.

We need to say, for the record, that the vast majority—99.9%—obviously are doing the best they can and they're hopefully treating people with all due care, but there are cases where we need to have a bit more transparency, and that's what this particular bill does. It allows what normally happens in hospitals, where the College of Physicians and Surgeons is able to go into a hospital surgery and take a look at the practices that are happening within the surgery as to how the physician—he or she—does the surgery and the process and procedures they follow, to ensure that there's quality at the end and that we're doing whatever is humanly possible to make the surgery a success. We need to have the same type of transparency within private clinics, such as people who do cosmetic surgery. What this particular bill tries to do is take that type of transparency and give the college the same type of rights that we already have within hospitals. I think that's a step in the right direction, and we should see what happens at committee.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Just speaking to the comments of the member from Kitchener-Waterloo, I think she made some very helpful, positive comments on a piece of legislation which is really about public protection, where they're very vulnerable, because it's obvious that there are all kinds of procedures taking place under the auspices of so-called, in some cases, experts in plastic surgery. There are some very unfortunate catastrophes that have occurred, and the member pointed those out. That's why this ability by the College of Physicians and Surgeons to monitor and to supervise these medical practitioners is needed, and that's why this legislation is needed.

I know yesterday in this House we heard a different version from a member of her own party, though, who condemned this legislation and regulatory change as totally unnecessary and totally a waste of time. So I'm just trying to figure out how the critic could stand up and say that this is needed and very important and not a perfect piece of legislation but at least it's needed, whereas yesterday in this House we heard members on the other side railing against this bill which protects the public from charlatans who are out there in the public, who are making millions performing plastic surgery on unsuspecting people who have faith in these people because they have these medical diplomas on their wall and are being abused. In some cases, again, people lost their lives as a result of the lack of protection.

This piece of legislation is about responding to a need. The public has been made very, very susceptible to these charlatans, and we have to protect the public when we couldn't do so under present legislation. So I support 141 and I support the member from Kitchener-Waterloo in her support of it.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I'm pleased to congratulate my colleague the member from Kitchener-Waterloo on her



comments this morning on Bill 141, An Act to amend the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991. It seems from the debate that we've heard this morning on this issue that there is a consensus in the Legislature that this bill should pass. I would predict that there's going to be unanimous support for this legislation; we're debating it at second reading. It is needed legislation, as was pointed out, and I would agree with that. But I would also say that we need to move forward on this bill quickly, because given the fact that there is support, let's get on with it. Let's move forward, let's pass the legislation so that we can move on to other urgent priorities.

Today's Toronto Star: "GM to Slash 47,000 Jobs." "Chrysler, GM Now Seek \$39B" in terms of government support. We have a provincial budget that has been needed for some time. We had a government that indicated that it was going to bring forward a budget on a priority basis. Now we're hearing the budget isn't going to be presented in this House for weeks to come. There is an extreme economic emergency in our communities, and this government is doing nothing in terms of sending a positive signal that it has a plan to resolve these issues, to work with the people of Ontario, to work with the opposition parties so that we can work together to work our way through this challenge. I think it's most unfortunate that this government is unwilling to bring forward those kinds of solutions or any kinds of ideas to deal with the economic challenge that we're facing. That's what we're talking about from this side of the House.

We call upon the government to bring forward its budget as soon as possible, so as to send a positive signal out there to the people of Ontario that it has a plan in place, that it has some credible ideas to work with them to send a positive signal for the future of Ontario. That's what's lacking and that's what's needed. That's what our party is calling for, and we're going to continue to call for this. We'll work with the government, from a perspective of opposition. We'll hold them to account but we'll work with them, and I call upon the government to recognize these urgent priorities—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. I shouldn't have to remind members, but I will, that questions and comments are intended to be directed toward the speech that was given by the member. From this point on, I'll be more observant when applying that rule.

Questions and comments?

0950

**Hon. David Caplan:** I'm pleased to rise and respond to the comments by the critic opposite. I appreciate the fact that she recognizes the importance of this legislation. I did find it curious, however, because I took a chance to read the transcript of Hansard from yesterday in this House and her colleague the leader of the official opposition says: "What are we debating in the Legislature this week? Cosmetic surgery? Young offender housing? Does that suggest a government and a Premier who know what they're doing? I say no."

So I say to the member that perhaps she does have some work to do to convince her colleagues about the

efficacy of and the support that should be in place for significant patient safety legislation, as she herself does recognize.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** What about support for the economy?

**Hon. David Caplan:** I hear the member from Renfrew say "support for the economy," and yes, this government does have a plan for the economy as well. But we have a plan for health care. We have a plan for patient safety. We have a plan in education. The work of this government—and we reach out to the opposition and ask them for their help and their support, their ideas in order to strengthen this. I want to congratulate and recognize the member from Waterloo, who brought forward some constructive ideas. I look forward to her fleshing those out and sharing them with us. Perhaps when the bill is in committee we would look toward her very sage advice in this matter.

I don't think any member on either side of the House has a monopoly on caring about the well-being of Ontarians and patient safety. I believe that all members, regardless of where they sit in this Legislature, do hold these very true. I urge the member from Waterloo to talk to her learned colleague from Brockville to perhaps get him on side and make him aware of the importance of patient safety. I again thank her for her support.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** We are now ready for the response from the member for Kitchener–Waterloo.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I appreciate the comments that have been made by the members for Eglinton–Lawrence, Timmins—is it St. James?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** James Bay.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Timmins–James Bay, sorry; and Wellington–Halton Hills and the Minister of Health. I do think it's incumbent upon all of us to ensure that this legislation passes through this House as quickly as possible, because there does seem to be a consensus of support for the legislation. I certainly would say to you that everybody in the Progressive Conservative caucus does support this bill. We also hope that the minister will be receptive to the amendments that we have brought forward today. As I said, they're not our amendments; they're amendments that have been provided to us by the colleges, in particular, of course, the College of Physicians and Surgeons. They are going to be important because they are needed to codify the investigatory powers of health colleges to ensure public safety.

I also agree with my other colleagues, whether it's the Leader of the Opposition here or whether it's my colleague from Wellington–Halton Hills: We need to get this legislation passed. We need to make the amendments because there are some very pressing issues. The Legislature has come back four weeks early this year. People in this province are focused, regrettably, on the economic distress that many of them are suffering, and this government does need to develop a plan, obviously, to ensure that we can create an environment that is going to provide hope and opportunity and jobs for our citizens.



So I would say, let's move the bill forward, let's make the amendments that are needed and let's focus on the priority of the economy.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate? Further debate? Does any other member wish to speak?

If not, Mr. Caplan has moved second reading of Bill 141.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I would ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Shall it be so referred? Agreed.

Orders of the day.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** There's no further business this morning.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** There being no further business, this House is in recess until 10:30 of the clock.

*The House recessed from 0955 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** I'm very delighted today to introduce to the House two distinguished guests: the president of the Federation of Canadian Turkish Associations, Mr. Nedim Duzenli; and a person who has written 17 books—he's from the international relations department of Ankara University—Professor Dr. Türkkaya Ataöv, who also is the director of five organizations attached to the United Nations. Welcome to the House.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Introductions?

I want to take this opportunity to welcome two guests of mine to the Speaker's gallery today: Jane Tucker and her daughter Rachel. Welcome to Queen's Park.

## LEGISLATIVE PAGES

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd like to beg the indulgence of the House as we use this as an opportunity to introduce our new pages. Please assemble.

I ask all members to join me in welcoming this group of legislative pages serving in the first session of the 39th Parliament: Purnika Anton, York South-Weston; Reed Bell, Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound; Danielle Boers, Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Westdale; Zaman Dubey, Brampton-Springdale; Arjun Gandhi, Vaughan; Alexander Glista, Oakville; Rachel Goldstein, Kingston and the Islands; Xiao Yan Guo, Willowdale; Tariq Haji, Thornhill; Nancy Kanwal, Etobicoke North; Jacob Macpherson, Kitchener Centre; Ashton McInnis, Windsor-Tecumseh; Olivia Mew, Trinity-Spadina; Patrick Mott, Pickering-Scarborough East; Jordan Plummer, Ajax-Pickering; Grace Qu, Davenport; Andrej Rosic, Mississ-

sauga-Streetsville; Rachel Trow, York-Simcoe; Maddie van Warmerdam, Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock; and Emily Wilson, Wellington-Halton Hills.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

## USE OF QUESTION PERIOD

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Yesterday, the member for Oshawa rose on a point of order at the conclusion of question period to take issue with a question asked of the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure respecting GO Transit. The member took the position that the minister's answer addressed the issue in a way that might more properly have been done in a ministerial statement.

The minister addressed the point of order by noting that the question and response related to a joint announcement that had already been made earlier yesterday by the Premier and the Prime Minister.

I undertook to review the matter and have now done so. The member for Oshawa is correct in his understanding that question period should not be used as a forum for the announcement of new government policy or initiatives. This has arisen many times before, and Speakers have consistently taken this view.

I would not categorize yesterday's occurrence as a blatant transgression of the Speakers' directions in this regard, it being more right on the line. But I will say to the minister that it is less about the timing of the announcement outside the House yesterday and more about the fact that the announcement did take place outside the House.

The Speaker, of course, cannot compel that government announcements first be made in the House, but many Speakers before have noted that it is courteous, where possible, to do so. Having said that, if the matter previously announced is subsequently brought to the attention of the House, then a ministerial statement is usually the proper vehicle to do so. Fairness to all sides is thereby observed since the standing orders permit the opposition to reply to such statements.

I thank the member from Oshawa for raising the matter yesterday and I ask the government side to be more vigilant about inappropriately using question period to make government announcements.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** My question is to the Premier—and it's good to have you join us today, Premier. Yesterday we were—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** Nothing out of order, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday—

*Interjections.*



**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** A very sensitive group over there. I wonder why.

Yesterday we were unable to get any meaningful answers from your finance minister as to why, in the midst of a recession, with almost 74,000 Ontario jobs lost just last month, you were delaying tabling a budget weeks beyond its promised date. Premier, do you not recognize the urgency of the situation, or are you simply at a loss in terms of how to react?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I know that the opposition and Ontarians generally have a real interest in our upcoming budget, and we look forward to presenting that in this House. I must say, though, that I think Ontarians have an expectation that we will do everything we can to get it right. In particular, there are two expectations that we have to meet. One is, we have to speak to the urgency of the global recession and of the job losses that are affecting us and the downturn we are experiencing in the Ontario economy. But at the same time they also want us to begin to build the foundation for a new and stronger economy for the future, and we will take the time necessary to get that right. But I can say—and I'll speak to this again in the supplementaries—that there is much that we have been doing and will continue to do before the budget itself comes out.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** That offered a lot of clarity, didn't it?

I would suggest, Premier, that, given your recent flipping and flopping on economic policy positions, you have, in essence, panicked. You're in deep water and you don't know how to swim. As they say in Great Britain, your knickers are in a twist, and your indecision is the real reason behind the budget delay. Premier, how can the people of this province have confidence during this difficult and challenging time when you have no concrete plan on how to respond to our economic challenges?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Just to remind my honourable colleague that four months ago we announced \$1.1 billion in new infrastructure funding for our municipal partners, four days ago we announced \$1 billion in infrastructure for smaller Ontario communities, and yesterday alone we announced another half-billion dollars for GO Transit improvements.

The point I want to make to my colleague and to Ontarians generally is that while we continue to make preparations for our budget, while we do everything we can to make sure we get it right for today and for tomorrow, we are continuing to make investments in the kinds of things that will create jobs in the short term and enhance our competitiveness in the long term.

1040

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** I'm going to quote from a column in the Ottawa Citizen, which commented on Mr. McGuinty's musings on the state of the economy: Mr. McGuinty, you can have a long conversation about

renovations, but "You can't have a long conversation about renovations when your house is on fire."

Premier, in Ontario, we've lost 136,000 jobs since November—almost 74,000 last month—bankruptcies are up 50%, and I think most objective observers, not to mention the people losing their jobs, would agree that this house is on fire. And you apparently don't know where to find the hose, let alone turn the water on.

Premier, will you show real leadership, meet your original budget timeline commitment, and ensure that it includes a comprehensive and realistic economic action plan?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, I understand my colleague's eagerness to receive the budget, and we are just as eager to present it in this House, but as I say, we will take all the time that is necessary, and no more than the time that is necessary, to ensure that we get it right, both for today and tomorrow.

In addition to those recent infrastructure announcements—again, four months, four days and just one day ago—we're also going to be shortly introducing into this Legislature our new green energy act. That has an objective to create some 50,000 new, clean and green jobs in the province of Ontario. We're going to do that before we introduce the budget, and I hope I'll be able to count on my colleagues in opposition, to have their support as we move forward with yet another piece of legislation to create more jobs for the people of Ontario.

## ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** Back to the Premier, and it has to do more specifically, Premier, with your jumping from pillar to post on economic policy at a time when Ontarians need to have confidence in the leadership of their government. Three months ago, you were boasting that your five-point plan was the answer to the province's economic challenges. Short weeks later, you've publicly discounted its effectiveness and started to muse about big ideas and make outrageous and inaccurate comments about being the first to come to grips with big questions related to our economic future. Premier, do you appreciate that Ontarians are increasingly concerned with your leadership and about what some describe as erratic behaviour?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I always appreciate my colleague's particular perspective on these issues, but I think that what we've got to do is keep our eye on the ball here. The fact of the matter is that we are experiencing the negative consequences of a global economic recession.

Let me just come back to our five-point plan, because I know that my colleagues, in their heart of hearts, continue to support the principles and objectives behind this plan. We continue to cut business taxes in the province of Ontario. I know that my colleagues, in fact, support that direction. We continue to invest in infrastructure. Last year, it was \$10 billion; this year, we had originally planned to spend \$8 billion, but it will, not surprisingly,



exceed that. We continue to invest heavily in innovation; I know that my colleagues support that. We continue to partner with business; they support that as well. And we will continue to invest in the skills of our people; I know they also support that. We've done that in the past and we'll keep doing that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** I remember the Premier's comments about layoffs in the auto industry not too long ago: "It's just a little bit of a contraction."

Premier, if you're steering the ship, it's apparent you're doing it without a nautical chart and we're hitting the shoals. We have a recession gripping the province, people losing their jobs and their homes, businesses closing, communities suffering. You called the Legislature back into session to deal with what? Our agenda this week: cosmetic surgery and young offender housing legislation. Premier, please explain to people having trouble putting food on their table why you have no clear plan to address their plight.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, I talked about announcements we made four months ago, four days ago and just yesterday. I'll just speak in a little bit more detail about what we announced yesterday. Together with the Prime Minister, we announced \$500 million for improvements in our GO Transit service. In particular, we're going to create 6,800 more parking spaces at 12 different GO Transit stations.

My friend says, though, that those are not a worthy investment, and I disagree strongly. Not only will those result in jobs—5,000 jobs alone for those projects—they will also speak to a cleaner environment and a greater quality of life for our families who rely on our GO Transit service. That's 5,000 jobs as a result of one announcement just made yesterday, to say nothing of the others that we made before that and the others we will continue to make, in some cases in concert with the federal government.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** In October of last year, the Premier introduced what was described as an emergency motion on the economy. Very few government members participated in that debate. Both opposition parties introduced constructive amendments. That emergency motion is still sitting on the order paper, not being debated or voted on, and I think it's symptomatic of this government's apparent inability to act in the face of real challenges.

This is a leadership crisis as well as an economic crisis, and as a result, the province is suffering. Other jurisdictions have acted. Premier, I ask you again, when will you show real leadership? Bring in a budget, an economic recovery plan, by no later than the first week of March.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I say to my colleague, given his desire to create jobs in the short term for Ontarians, I fully expect that I will have his support when we introduce our green energy act in this Legislature very

shortly, which has as an objective the creation of 50,000 jobs.

I want to remind my colleague of an announcement we made just last Friday of three particular projects, coincidentally in the riding of Leeds–Grenville. We're investing in the restoration and redecoration of the historic Brockville Arts Centre; we're investing in the King Street West infrastructure renewal project; and we're investing in the construction of a single building to house public works, fire, parks and recreation. I think those are significant projects, and I think they're important to people living in that particular riding. Those are the kinds of things that we will continue to support on a—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you, Premier. New question.

## MANUFACTURING JOBS

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** My question is to the Premier.

Yesterday, Premier, more bad news: General Motors and Chrysler have announced that 40,000 jobs are possibly going to be lost. We know there's going to be some effect on the Ontario economy.

Premier, you know it's an economic tsunami. Community after community is being affected across this province when it comes to job loss, and all you've been able to do is duck and hide. Your budget is not coming forward in order to deal with some of these issues. We, as New Democrats, have put forward a number of initiatives in order to respond to the situation that we're in. If we've been able to do that from the opposition side of the benches, why have you, as the government, not acted on what is a crisis now in Ontario?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I appreciate the question and I want to remind this honourable colleague of some of the measures that we have already put in place. Again, just four months ago, we invested \$1.1 billion, through our Investing in Ontario Act, in new infrastructure funding to our municipal partners. That work is under way right now and creating jobs right now. Four days ago, working with the federal government, we announced \$1 billion in infrastructure projects for smaller communities. Then, just yesterday, we announced another \$500 million by way of new investment in GO Transit improvements. Those are all government initiatives designed to create jobs in the short term and enhance our productivity in the long term. So of course I will disagree with my colleague when he says that we aren't doing anything between now and the budget. We've done much, and we'll keep doing more.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Nobody is going to argue that investments in infrastructure aren't important. But the bedrock of this economy is the automotive sector, the forestry sector and other manufacturing sectors in this province, and they're bleeding jobs by the hundreds of thousands. Workers across this province are saying, "If I haven't already got the pink slip, I'm worried I'm going to get one tomorrow." So my question to you is not about



what money you're putting into infrastructure. What are you going to do to attack the job losses in the manufacturing sector across this province?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Let me speak to the challenge being faced by our auto sector.

I understand the sentiment being expressed by my colleague. There is a great deal of anxiety being felt by Ontario families. In some cases, there's outright fear. What we're experiencing in Ontario is really without precedent; I understand that. But let me tell you what we're doing on the auto sector front.

1050

The first thing that we're doing is, we're working as closely as we can both with the federal government and the United States of America's government, understanding we have a fully integrated industry, understanding that this is going through restructuring, but understanding that what's at stake here is 400,000 good Ontario jobs. So we have said to the auto industry—and my colleague is aware of this—we're prepared to put forward \$4 billion by way of initial support for this particular industry. That's a significant contribution on the part of Ontario taxpayers. We'll expect that the auto sector, including the workers themselves, will bring something to the table.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Premier, you just don't get it. You're like the person at the crime scene who saw the crime and said, "Oh, God, nothing I can do." Listen: We've lost these jobs over the last three or four years. We've seen job after job being bled out of southern Ontario and across northern Ontario, and your government has sat back and done hardly nothing. You've had to wait for Obama in the United States or Stephen Harper to do something and you sit here like an innocent bystander. So I say to you again, when are you going to take your responsibility as the Premier of Ontario and do something about trying to stop the massive job losses in this province?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, I appreciate the perspective my colleague brings, but I don't agree with it and I just don't think Ontarians agree with it. I think they understand that something is happening, which is pretty big and comes from beyond Queen's Park and Ottawa, that is affecting the global economy on the whole. I think they understand that. I think what they want us to do is everything that we can, and we will continue to do everything that we can.

One of the things I want to remind my colleague, in terms of recent supports we provided for Timmins-James Bay: Just last week, we've invested in the drinking water distribution system in that riding. We have invested in the Hollywood Boulevard construction, in the Timmins east end water supply improvement project and in the fire hall renovation. Those are continuing investments. Those are important for the people living in that community. They will create jobs in the short term and will enhance the productivity and competitiveness of that community in the long term.

## MANUFACTURING AND FORESTRY SECTOR JOBS

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Well, I have no idea where Hollywood Boulevard is in my riding, but that's a whole other issue.

Premier, you say that you're concerned; imagine those people who are in the situation of having lost their jobs. We saw last week Marathon, the only employer in town, shutting down and leaving those people high and dry with no jobs, as we saw in Smooth Rock Falls last year. We saw Terrace Bay, this morning, announce a layoff for some six or eight weeks. We see the same thing going on in Nairn Centre. What do you say to those workers who have been waiting for your government for the last five years to do something about stopping the loss of jobs in northern Ontario and the forestry sector, as they see more coming?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, I know that some parts of Ontario have been hit harder than others and northern Ontario, particularly because of its reliance on forestry and some of our resource-based industries, has been particularly affected by this. But I want to assure folks living in those communities that we will continue to do everything we can to lend some strength to their economies. I know, again, last week in Terrace Bay we invested in a community centre roof replacement, for example. That's a project that is close to \$1 million. I know it's not everything, but it will create some jobs in the short term.

We will continue to do everything that we can but we can't do everything. I think Ontarians understand that. But we will do everything we can, particularly through our upcoming budget, to address some immediate pressures while at the same time building a stronger foundation for a future economy.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Nobody in Terrace Bay and nobody in Timmins-James Bay or anywhere else argues that infrastructure investment is not important. We all agree on that. The issue is, what is your government going to do in order to assist those industries that are shutting down, one after the other, across this province? We saw just this morning, again, the issue of Terrace Bay and Nairn Centre. Last week it was Marathon. Before that it was Thunder Bay. The week before that it was Hearst. We are seeing town after town lose jobs across this province and your government's done nothing. So I'm going to ask you this: Are you prepared, at the very least, to announce an industrial hydro rate in order to assist those industries that are most affected by the price of electricity in this province?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** I want to say to the honourable member that we recognize the north has experienced particular challenges, but Minister Gravelle and I had the opportunity recently to host the Grow North forum in Thunder Bay on February 4; 375 people from northern Ontario came together with a sense of



enthusiasm about their communities. As one example, the request for expressions of interest that the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ontario Power Generation have launched to create a made-in-Ontario supply of biomass for conversion of our coal-fired assets has created excitement in many communities in northern Ontario and for many of those who are unemployed related to the forestry sector. The Ministry of Natural Resources has worked with forestry companies to invest with them directly to transition them to lower-cost operations, so they use less electricity.

There are many challenges in the north. This government stands with northerners, working with them to look for opportunities in this difficult environment. We've demonstrated our willingness to invest and we will invest further to protect the jobs that are possible to protect in northern Ontario, to stand alongside those—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Further to the Premier: We saw last week the question of what happened in Sudbury with Xstrata: 700 jobs lost. We, as New Democrats, my colleagues Shelley Martel at the time and the other northern members along with Howard Hampton, were in Sudbury with the municipalities and the unions and others two years ago calling on your government to make sure that we had guarantees when it came to the sale of Vale Inco to Xstrata and those companies, that there would be some protection for jobs in Sudbury and Timmins. But even more important is the protection of the services being sold to the companies. Here we are; we've seen the 700 job losses. Basically, those agreements have not been kept.

Will you agree, finally, that you missed the boat two years ago in doing what should have been your responsibility in order to give protection to the people of Sudbury?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** To the Minister of Northern Development.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** Certainly in terms of the question itself, it was devastating news last week when Xstrata announced the layoffs of those workers. Our hearts go out to the workers. It has been a very difficult and challenging time, there's no question about it. If there's a silver lining, it is that Xstrata remains very committed to the Sudbury area. They're committed to the operation of their Nickel Rim South project and they have worked very closely with the union to try to extend the benefits for those who have been laid off for 16 more weeks.

There's no doubt this is a very challenging time in all sectors. Certainly, the mining sector is not immune from the global financial crisis, but I think it's important that we continue to work closely with the mining companies and with all those who are involved in the process while we go through these really difficult times.

#### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** A question to the Premier: One of the bland expressions that Dalton McGuinty used to pass

off as leadership was "to do much to fix the roof while the sun was shining." Well, Premier, let's review your record since the last election: 72,700 full-time jobs gone; 86,000 private sector jobs gone; and 100,000 well-paying manufacturing jobs gone. Ontario has officially become a have-not province on the welfare rolls of Confederation. I hope the taxpayers got some kind of warranty, because if the roof isn't caving in, I don't know what that is.

Premier, it is finally time to act. Speak to the gentleman beside you and tell him to come forward with a budget immediately.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, I understand my colleague's impatience in this regard, but we're going to take the time to get it right. That may frustrate them, but so be it. We will take all the time that is necessary, and no more than the time that is necessary, to ensure that we put forward a budget that speaks to the expectations of the people of Ontario and that achieves two important objectives. One is to respond to the crisis as it's affecting our families and businesses today, and the other is to begin to lay a stronger foundation for a new economy.

The ground continues to shift under our feet. It is very difficult to get a consensus from economists as to where the economy is going to go during the course of the next six months, let alone during the course of the next 18 months. So we will take the time to get it right. In the meantime, we will continue to invest in new infrastructure projects.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** The Premier says his priority is to find consensus. Premier, Ontario families want to see leadership in action.

Premier Wall in Saskatchewan, four months ago, brought forward his economic stimulus package that lowered business taxes. Three months ago, Prince Edward Island acted with a major stimulus investment. In British Columbia, Premier Campbell, four months ago, brought forward his 10-point economic plan.

Here in Ontario, Dalton McGuinty looks like he was on the losing end of a game of freeze tag. Premier, it's time to end the paralysis. Speak to the guy beside you. Tell him to get off his backside and bring forward a budget by the end of this month or the first week in March.

1100

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I wish my colleague was as well acquainted with the happenings in this Legislature as he is with the happenings in other Legislatures. It was four months ago, in our own fall economic statement, that we did a number of things, including investing \$1.1 billion in new infrastructure projects with our municipal partners. Those projects are under way right now. We made that announcement in this House four months ago.

I can appreciate that my colleague has an interest in what's taking place in other parts of the country, but I'd ask him to pay a little bit of attention to what we're doing, through this Legislature, right here in Ontario.



## ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is to the Premier. Here's the disastrous state of Ontario's economy by the numbers, Premier: January job numbers from Stats Canada show a collapsing job market, with 71,000 jobs lost in November alone. Over 300,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost in the last four years. Manufacturing shipments have declined by almost 10% in one month alone.

The NDP has a jobs plan. Where is the minister's plan? Also, the Premier stands up in this House and always says he wants to work with the opposition for the betterment of Ontario. It doesn't happen, because they don't pass any of our bills.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Economic Development.

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** The member knows, just locally, about the investments that have been made in the city of Hamilton through the communities in transition fund, investments made with the Dofasco Learning and Development Centre, investments made with Ironworkers Local 736 and the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners Local 18. These are just some of the investments that the government has made.

This government's approach has been to take a series of taxpayer investments and funds and provide assistance directly to communities and businesses. We have not been doing that for the last couple of months; we have not been doing that for the last year; this has been the strategy that this government has undertaken for the last five years.

So, yes, it is true that other provinces are making investments. But it is a strategy that this government has been undertaking over the last five years, and we will continue to make those investments in all of your communities out there.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** We've done the government a favour. We laid out a plan that would get Ontario's economy moving again. We need the NDP's aggressive Buy Ontario program not just in transit but in all areas of public sector procurement. We need a real, massive, aggressive infrastructure program. Not only will it put people back to work immediately, but it will lay out the groundwork for jobs of the future. We need a \$10.25-an-hour minimum wage immediately, to put money in the pockets of people who can spend it directly in our economy.

We've done our part. We've laid out a good plan. Where is the minister's job plan, and why won't you co-operate with the opposition?

**Hon. Mr. Bryant:** The member refers to the need for massive investment. I remind the member of a \$14-billion investment just last week—where? In East Hamilton Recreational Trail Hub and Waterfront Link. This is a \$14-billion investment that's being made. Look at this investment as we go into the future, not only in terms of the investments in the city of Hamilton but in the province.

I recognize that when the New Democrats were in power, the unemployment rate was 9%. I recognize that when the Conservatives were in power, the unemployment rate was higher than it is today. But we will continue to work with the opposition parties to make investments such as this in Hamilton—millions of dollars of investments—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## HEALTH CARE

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell:** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Since I was elected in Huron-Bruce, my constituents have continued to ask me one very important question: Where can they find a family health care provider? Last week, I was very pleased to see the launch of a new program to help connect unattached patients with a health care provider. It is a tool that I know every member of this House will use to help constituents find the care they need close to home. However, I am wondering how effective this program will be in areas of the province where there may be a shortage of health care providers. How will patients in these areas get connected to care?

**Hon. David Caplan:** I would like to thank the member from Huron-Bruce for the question. I know that she is a very passionate and committed advocate in helping constituents find health care providers. Our new Health Care Connect service is a unique, made-in-Ontario solution that the Premier launched last week. It is a telephone hotline that will help Ontarians who don't have a family health care provider find one. By calling a special 1-800 number, Ontarians without a family health care provider can add their names to a registry. A nurse, known as a care connector, will then attempt to match that unattached patient and their family with a family health care provider—a physician or a nurse practitioner—who is accepting patients. The strategy will help us ensure that more Ontarians are able to get access to family health care. We're still committed to rolling out an additional 22 nurse-practitioner-led clinics and 50 family health teams. Health Care Connect helps us target the areas that need these—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell:** I can hear from all the members of the House that they do agree that it sounds like a very promising initiative.

In the last election our government committed to finding family health care providers for another 500,000 Ontarians. I think Health Care Connect will help us reach this very ambitious goal. In the meantime I know that a lot of Ontarians without a family health care provider are relying on emergency rooms to provide them with the care that they need. I have heard the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care refer to ERs as the "default doorway into the health care system." But for people with minor ailments or injuries, the ER probably isn't the

best place to go for treatment. Can the Minister of Health tell the House how he is going to ensure that Ontarians know about the health care options other than ERs that exist in their communities?

**Hon. David Caplan:** Again, I want to thank the member for the question. It's very germane and appropriate. I'm pleased to tell the House about another innovative initiative that we launched last week. It is a new website called Your Health Care Options. Using Google-style mapping and simple search terms, the site makes it easy for Ontarians to find health care services in their community. By typing in their postal code, Ontarians can find the nearest walk-in or after-hours clinic, urgent care centre, family health team, general practitioner and emergency room. The site will link to other health resources, including information about Health Care Connect. Eventually, the site will be expanded to include information relating to all front-line health services in Ontario, including community care access centres, nurse-practitioner-led clinics, laboratories and long-term-care homes. I'm so excited about both these new initiatives. I have no doubt that our Health Care Connect phone line and Your Health Care Options website will reduce wait—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### MINISTRY OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

**Mr. Frank Klees:** The question is to the Premier. On July 26, 2007, the Premier accepted the resignation of one of his cabinet ministers following an investigation that revealed inappropriate distribution of taxpayers' funds through a program of the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration. At that time, the Premier said this: "This is ... a government that believes in accountability. And in this circumstance, Mike feels, and I agree, the minister must be held accountable—and that stepping down is the right thing to do."

Will the Premier tell us if he believes that the out-of-control spending of \$23.4 million on outside lawyers and consultants to recover \$3.5 million is responsible administration by his government? And if not, which of his ministers does he believe should be held responsible? The minister responsible for the Ontario Realty Corporation, the Attorney General, or both?

1110

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Attorney General.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** My friend will remember that the case actually started under the government of which he was a part. But let's be clear: That's a lot of money. I think we can do better in our approach to private counsel, and that's why we've taken a number of steps. First of all we brought the case in-house, we concluded the case, we were successful and we're pursuing the costs from the losing party.

Secondly, we have taken the approach that we do not hire outside counsel on a regular basis now as was once

the practice. We do everything we can in-house. Where we do retain outside, we partner up, and when we have to retain outside, there is a much more rigorous examination of accounts than there was. I can speak to further reforms that we've taken in the supplementary.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** The Attorney General himself attempted to keep the truth about these scandalous legal fees from the public.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I would ask the member to choose more parliamentary language, please.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** On behalf of the government, he fought the Toronto Star's efforts to get access to that information, but he lost that fight. We now know that there were \$23.4 million in outside legal and consulting fees paid. For eight years, this government signed blank cheques to Bay Street lawyers. There was no oversight and there was no accountability. As one veteran litigator said, "It was throwing good taxpayer money after bad. It was out of control. In all my years practising law, I had never seen anything like it."

Will the Premier agree that this out-of-control spending by his ministers is in fact unacceptable, and will he tell us if he intends to hold either one of them responsible—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** With respect to the release of information, our position on that from the beginning was that when the case was over, the information would be released. We will not release information that may affect the public interest in the course of a lawsuit. That's been our position all along.

Secondly, I say to my friend again that this case did start some years ago, and you may recall its beginning, because you were part of the government responsible for the agency that started it. But we're here now. We took the three steps I outlined and we've also taken steps to streamline the civil litigation process itself. Beginning January 1, 2010, we're going to have a much more simplified process that will make this and all cases faster, less expensive and more accessible.

#### SPECIAL CARE HOMES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour le ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée. A few weeks ago in this House, I raised the issue of sexual abuse allegations at the Goodfellow home for special care in Garson, in my riding. I asked the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care if his ministry had been inspecting the home regularly as per regulation. First the minister said that it was not his responsibility, but then last week the minister confirmed in a letter that homes for special care are indeed the responsibility of his ministry, and I thank him for that.

My question is, did the Ministry of Health inspect the Goodfellow home for special care in Garson twice monthly as per regulation?



**Hon. David Caplan:** The member is correct; I did clarify and expand on my earlier answer, and did provide that in fact the ministry has undertaken its statutory requirements. The homes for special care program is an important program where long-term-care residence is provided for people discharged from provincial psychiatric hospitals. I can confirm to you that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care is responsible for licensing and the financial administration of homes for special care under the act. In order to receive their yearly licence, each home must comply with inspections conducted by the fire department, public health and the psychiatric hospital field office. The Goodfellow residence has undergone these inspections on a regular basis.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I want to make sure that I understood his answer clearly. What I want to know is, I want to have confidence that the inspection of the Goodfellow home took place every two weeks, like they are mandated to do to maintain their licence, as the minister said, because some of the residents at the Goodfellow home tell me that they never saw an inspector at that home. I'm really worried as to who is protecting those vulnerable residents in dozens and dozens of homes for special care in this province.

Are inspections occurring at all homes for special care twice monthly across this province, as the minister said and as per regulation from his ministry? We want reassurance. Thank you.

**Hon. David Caplan:** I believe I just provided a very clear answer to the member that in order to receive—  
*Interjection.*

**Hon. David Caplan:** I know the member from Niagara may not care about this.

In order to receive their yearly licence, each home must comply with inspections conducted by the fire department, by public health and by the psychiatric hospital field office. I can confirm to the member that the Goodfellow residence has undergone these inspections on a regular basis, in compliance with the regulatory environment.

The member asked, related to an ongoing police investigation—since there is a police investigation that is currently underway, I can't comment further on the status of that investigation, obviously, as the member would well understand. I do want to thank the member, however, for her interest and for her advocacy on behalf of these vulnerable individuals who need and deserve the very best care possible that the province and our partners—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## POVERTY

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Two weeks ago, I had the opportunity of hosting a poverty reduction town hall in my riding of Ottawa Centre, and I'm very grateful that

the minister attended that town hall meeting. We had representatives, from the large groups of people who came to this meeting, from the city of Ottawa, the youth services bureau, the social planning council, the Centre-town Community Health Centre, ACORN, the Odawa Native Friendship Centre and many more.

The purpose of the meeting was twofold: one, to get feedback about the poverty reduction strategy, and also to talk about the next steps in terms of implementing the strategy. Those at the meeting were happy to have the opportunity to present their feedback to the minister on the poverty reduction strategy and express their excitement about being part of the solution.

My question is, how will the government continue to engage community partners so that they have a say in how the poverty reduction strategy is implemented?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I was very happy to be in Ottawa with the member a couple of weeks ago to have a conversation with individuals and groups in his community about our recently released poverty reduction strategy. We heard first-hand from people about the challenges that they face, about the successes they've had in making a difference locally, but most of all I think what we learned is how committed people are to work together to implement solutions that work in Ottawa, that work in the local community.

I've had the opportunity to go to other communities—Mississauga, Peterborough, Ingersoll; tomorrow I'm going to Kitchener-Waterloo to talk to people there who are concerned about this issue.

For the first time, we have a plan to reduce poverty in this province. I'm proud of the plan, but the work has just begun. Our government is committed to working with our partners to make sure that we make the difference we know we can make.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I appreciate that my constituents and community partners would not only be listened to, but also empowered to put in place local solutions that work to reduce poverty.

There were some people at the meeting who were concerned that a poverty reduction strategy only sets a target to reduce child poverty. Poverty affects us all. Whether it's a child, a single adult or a person with a disability, we all suffer when someone doesn't get the help they need to achieve their full potential. I know that the poverty reduction strategy recognizes there are many groups disproportionately affected by poverty and includes initiatives to support them, but some groups have argued that we should also set specific targets for these groups or one general target for everyone.

Can the minister please explain why the poverty reduction strategy has an initial focus on children, and why the target is based on child poverty?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I thank the member for this very important question, and certainly one I have been getting across the province. When we set out to create Ontario's first poverty reduction strategy, we knew we couldn't do everything all at once. If we wanted to



make a real, tangible difference for Ontarians, we had to start somewhere. We learned that focusing on children first and giving them the tools and supports they need is the smartest long-term investment we can make. Dollars invested now in kids will create a more prosperous Ontario for years and, indeed, generations to come. So we did make the choice to set our first targets with children. We have a plan to break the cycle of poverty by giving children and families the opportunity to achieve their full potential. Our target is to lift 90,000 children out of poverty over the next five years. It's the right thing to do. But we are by no means ignoring—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

1120

### TOBACCO INDUSTRY

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** A question to the Minister of Agriculture: Tonight, the tobacco board is hosting a mass meeting for farmers to discuss the \$300-million federal exit package for farmers forced out of business by governments, including Mr. McGuinty's government. Banks are calling in loans. Farmers have lost something like \$500 million in equity. Tonight we will hear the federal plan. Minister, what is the McGuinty plan to carry tobacco country beyond this economic devastation?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** First of all, I would remind the honourable member that our government has provided a \$50-million investment for transition for tobacco producers: \$35 million went directly to tobacco producers; \$15 million went to communities that would be impacted when the transition would take place. So our government has been quite proactive.

In addition to that, we have also, with our rural economic development program, been very open to hearing from those communities that have ideas around how they can co-operatively work in partnerships to assist with this transition.

So our government has been there with the \$50-million transition. We continue to be there with our rural economic—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Minister, last August you received \$157 million as your part of the civil settlement agreement with the tobacco companies. The farmers are looking for a bit more leadership from Mr. McGuinty here. The fiscal year is drawing to a close. We now need a made-in-Ontario solution. We need something to replace well over 9,000 jobs destroyed by the demise of this tobacco economy. You indicated previously that you would be part of this federally led exit program.

Minister, the question is, will you, at minimum, establish a mechanism for dialogue with the tobacco community and with tobacco farm families throughout southwestern Ontario?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** I would say the mechanism that I've been using with the tobacco farmers has

been the telephone and face-to-face meetings. I've met with them very regularly. In fact, I have embraced the proposal that they brought to this government, as has this government, with respect to having a user-funded strategy. That is what Ontario committed to be a part of.

At this point in time, tobacco producers have been working with their tobacco board around the exit strategy that was announced by the federal government. We certainly are supportive of those efforts. I understand that the marketing board is meeting today with its members to provide the details of that plan.

We will continue to be there to assist in any way that we can, whether it's with the commission or providing supports to the board. We believe that—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

### CONSUMER PROTECTION

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** My question is to the Minister of Small Business and Consumer Services. An advisory board recommended that borrowing costs for payday loans be capped at \$21 per \$100. That's substantially above Manitoba's rate of \$17, despite the previous minister, Ted McMeekin, saying in this very House, "I really am optimistic, as an honourable member, to do better than that." For low-income Ontario workers facing increasingly difficult times, the recommended rate is worlds away from Manitoba's, let alone my Bill 54, modeled after Quebec's 35% cap. Why won't the minister side with low-income families instead of the payday loan industry?

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** I want to thank the member for asking this question. First of all, I really want to thank the board members for actually doing very extensive consultation with the companies that make payday loans and also the people who borrow these loans. They came up with very good recommendations, in my view at this point in time, that balance the interests of the industry but also the interests of the people who borrow these services.

#### *Interjections.*

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** This is the recommendation that is made by the board. The government has not made any decision with regard to it.

The Payday Loans Act came into existence in 2008, and there are other measures we are taking in order to protect the most vulnerable in our society that I would be more than pleased to outline in my supplementary.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I miss the previous minister's optimism and ability on this.

The fact is that the recommended cap will only affect the fringe payday lenders. It's no wonder the Canadian Payday Loan Association called the recommendations "balanced"; they won't even be affected. Instead of standing up for the payday loan industry, why won't the new minister stand up for low-income Ontarians?



**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** I really want to congratulate the previous minister for actually coming up with the Payday Loans Act.

Let me just talk about some of the other measures that we are doing with regard to the Payday Loans Act. One is prohibiting the rollover of loans. The other recommendation that was made by this board is that most of the people who use these loans sometimes get used to these loans. That's why we are coming in with the education system, so that we can actually educate the people that these are expensive loans; they don't need to get into these again and again and again. So the education is an important component of this.

We are also making sure that these loans are posted so that people are aware of the cost of these loans. There is going to be full disclosure; there's going to be an education component to this. But at the same time, as I said before—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

### MUNICIPALITIES

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Minister, recently I came across a press release from one of our NDP colleagues vying for their leadership and his plan for Ontario municipalities. Many of the items being proposed are ones that our government has worked hard on, in partnership with municipalities and other partners, to improve Ontario communities. I remember specifically when the government released a provincial-municipal review last fall. Minister, I would, however, appreciate you outlining what our government has done for Ontario municipalities and how we are working with them to strengthen our communities.

**Hon. Jim Watson:** I want to thank the honourable member from Scarborough—Rouge River. We're very fortunate in this caucus to have a number of MPPs who have municipal experience, as the honourable member does. They understand the challenges facing our 444 municipalities. That's why I was so pleased in October when we reached a consensus agreement with AMO and the city of Toronto for a report that talks about and implements an uploading strategy for the next several years. In fact, when all of the uploading takes place, municipalities across this province will save \$1.5 billion. But we're not waiting for the full implementation. In fact, this year alone, municipalities, as a result of uploading ODSP administrative costs, will save \$86 million.

We look forward to continuing to work with the municipal sector. I thank my colleague the Minister of Finance, AMO and the city of Toronto for reaching this landmark agreement that finally gives the respect to municipalities they deserve.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** Thank you, Minister. Like yourself, I come from a municipal background. I spent a number of years as a municipal councillor in Toronto and

kept a close eye on the proceedings at city hall last week when Toronto unveiled its budget for 2009. Like many jurisdictions, Toronto is facing difficulties in the wake of global economic uncertainty. As the largest city in Canada and the financial centre of the country, it is critical that Toronto continues to be a strong and vibrant city able to compete globally.

Infrastructure projects have been cited a great deal recently to help stimulate the economy, but other measures such as investments in affordable housing, transit and providing relief to property taxpayers can provide needed support. What steps and what investments has the province taken to support cities like Toronto?

1130

**Hon. Jim Watson:** I want to congratulate the Liberal MPPs from the city of Toronto who are non-stop advocates for their city, for their community, and they do an excellent job making sure that Toronto gets its fair share.

Let me just start by telling the member that support for Toronto—this is important to hear—from this government, the McGuinty government, since 2003 is five times higher today than it was when this government took over. Let me give you a couple of examples: the Investing in Ontario Act—Toronto received \$238 million; \$180 million for the affordable housing program; the rent bank, \$6.3 million, which has prevented over 3,000 evictions to date.

As a result of the Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review, the uploads this year alone for the city of Toronto are close to \$60 million, and when fully implemented, the upload savings to the taxpayers of Toronto will be close to \$400 million.

### CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. I'm sure that the minister is aware of the correlation between economic downturn and the demand for children's mental health services. My question is simple: What steps have you and Mr. McGuinty taken to anticipate this demand?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The member opposite is absolutely right that an economic downturn does increase the demand for services across my ministry and others as well, whether it's children's aid societies, children's mental health or social assistance. We are all impacted by an economic downturn.

That is why we really strengthened services for children in the first five years of our government. That strengthening of services will pay dividends as the anticipated increase does in fact come to fruition as the economy does what it is already doing.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** We already have evidence that the economic downturn is affecting the demand for children's mental health services. Since 2006, Windsor has lost thousands of manufacturing jobs. With unemployment soaring above 10%, children's mental health cases

in Windsor and Essex have increased by 50% since the auto downturn. Is the minister aware of this, and what has she done to help the children of Windsor and Essex county?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I think it's important that the member opposite acknowledges that we have actually made tremendous improvements in children's mental health—the first base funding increases in over a decade. In fact, when her party was in power, they froze children's mental health and kept it frozen. It was only when our government was elected that we began to reinvest in children's mental health.

We provided the first base increase in over a decade in 2004-05 and another \$24.5 million in 2007-08. We've also expanded access in rural, remote and underserved communities through the telepsychiatry program. We doubled funding for that. It went from one hub and 14 satellite offices to three hubs and 24 offices.

Children's mental health is a very important priority for our government. We're committed to continuing to improve it. We welcome the select committee's work on this—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### HEALTH CARE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Lyn Edwards, the NDP candidate in Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, knows that people in her riding need solutions to the lack of access to primary care and the lack of physicians. Mrs. Edwards and her community support the development of a community health centre for Lindsay and Kawartha Lakes, a model of primary care that will provide access to doctors, nurse practitioners, social workers, dieticians etc. for people in her riding.

Will the minister admit that a hotline will not replace the need for community health centres, primary health care or more doctors?

**Hon. David Caplan:** It didn't take a by-election to get this government working on the problem of getting doctors and patients together. In fact, since 2003, 630,000 Ontarians who did not have access to a family physician now have one, because of the determined work of this Premier and this government. Because of the work of this government, we have doubled the number of community health centres in this province, and I'm very proud of that record. Because of the work of this government, we have rolled out new initiatives, like nurse-practitioner-led clinics. The first one, as the member would be aware, is located in Sudbury, with a satellite in Walden. Three more are on the way to be awarded, and an additional request for proposals for the remainder will be going out this spring.

It doesn't take a by-election to get this government working to provide better access to health care. In fact, we started on day one.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** More than 25,000 people in Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock do not have access to primary care: They do not have access to a nurse practitioner; they do not have access to a physician. While this government has been busy promoting a phone line and a new website, they seem to have forgotten that solving the province's problems in health care takes more than phone lines and websites. Communities like Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock need real solutions—solutions that are tailor-made to their communities, like funding a new CHC; solutions which Lyn Edwards would be ready to bring to this House.

What is the minister planning to do regarding the new community health centre in Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock?

**Hon. David Caplan:** Ontarians remember that the New Democrats cut medical school spaces 13%. Is it any wonder that we experience these kinds of shortages? That's why on day one, this government began over doubling the number of med school spaces in this province.

I can tell you I've had conversations with Rick Johnson. Rick Johnson has been advocating for better health care in Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, and in fact he wants to build on the record that this government has provided. Whether that's to more than double the number of international medical graduates, whether that is increasing the number of medical school spaces by 23%, I can tell you that Rick Johnson knows and gets it. Rick Johnson advocates for the people and wants to build on the results. We don't want to go back to the sorry NDP days where we cut doctors, where we cut nurses, and it's Ontario patients who paid the price.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

The Minister of Economic Development and Trade on a point of order.

#### CORRECTION OF RECORD

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** Mr. Speaker, in my exuberance for the investment, and in the hurly-burly of question period, I did misspeak as to what the investment is. It is a \$14-million investment in the city of Hamilton. That ain't chicken feed, and it's still a good investment—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** That is a point of order. The member is correcting his record.

The member from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek, on a point of order.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I'd like the minister to have the balance of the cheque sent to my riding so we can build all those things he promised.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** That is not a point of order.

There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1138 to 1500.*



## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

## SCHOOL PLAYGROUND

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** This morning I had the opportunity to speak in this House about the extreme economic challenge we're facing and the government's lack of leadership in responding to it. This afternoon, I wish to call the attention of the House to a local matter of concern to many of my constituents in Acton.

Because of what the Toronto Star calls "pressure" from the Minister of Education, the Halton District School Board was pushed toward initiating a process to sell part of the playground at McKenzie-Smith Bennett public school. According to yesterday's Star, hundreds of people gathered on Family Day to support the children of their community and their children's right to keep their existing playground.

I've received numerous e-mails from constituents and I'm aware that the board and the town of Halton Hills council are working together to find a solution. But let's remember who started this schoolyard spat: It was this Minister of Education. Once a self-styled champion of local school board autonomy, she is now forcing school boards to take the heat for unpopular decisions, decisions that are, in fact, rooted in her own bad policy and evasion of responsibility.

Acton has spoken loud and clear. The community wants a solution to keep the school playground, but for that to happen, we need the minister to back off the board and let the children play.

## EDEN MILLS SKI CLUB

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Cross-country skiing is a wonderful way to stay fit and have fun during our great Canadian winters. The Eden Mills cross-country ski club is located just south of Guelph. Their jackrabbit program provides children aged four to 14 with skills training, while also focusing on the lifelong benefits of active living and fitness. Eden Mills ski club also offers a wide range of skiing challenges for the more advanced cross-country skier. Their mission is to help children learn and enjoy cross-country skiing in a safe and supportive environment.

I'm very pleased that the Ontario Trillium Foundation has provided Eden Mills with a \$15,000 grant to assist with the purchase of new trail-grooming and rental ski equipment. Eden Mills has been using aging, 20-year-old grooming equipment, hoping it would make it through just one more winter. The Trillium funding allows the club to acquire reliable, efficient and up-to-date equipment so that they can continue grooming the trails for prime skiing. The addition of rental ski equipment for children will permit more families to enjoy cross-country skiing. Being able to rent ski equipment for kids, whose height and feet grow every winter, helps parents reduce the costs of participating in a great sport.

I'm thrilled our government is able to support such a worthwhile program.

## WASTE DISPOSAL

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** On February 4, in the House of Commons, the member for Ottawa South, David McGuinty, implied in his questioning of the Minister of Natural Resources, the Honourable Lisa Raitt, that there was a connection between two truckloads of sewage from the city of Ottawa found to be radioactive and Atomic Energy of Canada's Chalk River nuclear facility.

There are two things that trouble me here. The first is the member's total lack of knowledge of how a municipal water and sewage system works. The second is his total disregard of the facts.

On the first part, I would urge him to spend some time visiting the system operating in his city, instead of conjuring up ridiculous scenarios that aren't even possible. On the second issue, I would remind him that, as a parliamentarian, he has a duty to accept the responsibility bestowed upon him. That responsibility would include not falsely attempting to create a panic by completely misrepresenting the facts. When this is done solely to gain partisan political points—

**Mr. Dave Levac:** Point of order, Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. The member for Brant on a point of order.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I let this one go on hoping that the member would get off that course, but in our standing rules, section 23, "In debate" or a statement, "a member shall be called to order by the Speaker if he or she: ... charges another member with uttering a deliberate falsehood" or "imputes false or unavowed motives to another member."

That was not acceptable.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I hear the point of order that is raised. I was listening very closely myself. None of the discussion that the honourable member had related to any member in this chamber. He was making reference to somebody within the House of Commons in Ottawa. I have no jurisdiction over that. I'm going to allow the member to continue.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** When this is done solely to gain partisan political points, it calls into question the member's ethics. I ask that the Premier, who is also the MPP for Ottawa South, help deliver this message. After all, he enjoys greater access to his federal counterpart than I do.

The Premier knows that when one behaves irresponsibly, they can hurt a lot of innocent people. Surely he'll let the member know that it is time to grow up.

## CHILD PROTECTION

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** There was once a little girl who lived very close to my riding and went to school and church in my riding. Her name was Holly Jones. Holly was born on September 14, 1992. She died in her 13th



year, on May 12, 2003. There is no one in my riding who does not know the name Holly Jones and the horrible circumstances of her death. Many in our riding know about the valour, the courage and the incredible social justice activity of her parents—Maria Jones in particular, her mother.

Maria came to see me and asked that something be done, really, to commemorate the memory of her daughter Holly Jones, but also to prevent the abuse that Holly had suffered from ever happening to any child again. On her better instincts and on her advice, I introduced a motion: “That, in the opinion of this House, primary prevention programs such as the Boost Child Abuse Prevention and Intervention program be mandatory in all Ontario elementary schools as requested by the family of Holly Jones.” I would certainly encourage this government to speak to curriculum committees across the province to make it so. It’s a very inexpensive program, about \$1 million.

The time to address the state of children or a child at risk is always the same; it’s always now.

#### AUTOMOTIVE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

**Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis:** I have good news. Ontario is joining forces with a world-leading company that creates innovative infrastructure for electric cars. The California-based company called Better Place will establish a Canadian head office as well as an electric car demonstration and education centre in Ontario. Building on this partnership, we will be releasing a study in May which will look at ways to speed up the introduction of electric vehicles in this province.

In addition to establishing international partnerships, we have been making significant investments in automotive research and innovation right here at home, particularly in my hometown of Hamilton.

Keeping ahead of the curve, we have invested over \$15 million in the initiative for automotive manufacturing innovation. This collaboration between McMaster University and the University of Waterloo is focusing on developing new technologies for producing lighter-weight, cost-competitive automobiles.

These partnerships and investments could not have come at a better time. They will ensure that Hamilton and Ontario remain at the cutting edge of automobile research and development in a transforming economy.

#### HEALTH CARE

**Mr. John O’Toole:** Yesterday, the citizens of Durham riding saw a new plan for the delivery of acute care services in hospitals. The clinical services plan was presented to the board of the Central East Local Health Integration Network.

The Central East Local Health Integration Network is a very large area, serving from east Toronto to Algonquin Park, including Peterborough and Northumberland. I

want to emphasize that this plan must not reduce or detract from the local hospitals with dedicated teams who provide outstanding service in my riding of Durham and in many parts of the large area.

Health care is a provincial responsibility, and it is up to Premier McGuinty and his government to ensure that Durham region’s hospitals receive their share of funding. Thanks to Dalton McGuinty, Lakeridge Health Corp., a part of the Central East LHIN, now faces a \$10.8-million deficit. The Growing Communities Healthcare Alliance estimates that high-growth communities like Durham in the GTA/905 receive \$255 less per resident compared to the rest of Ontario.

This is all about fairness for all Ontarians. It should be noted that the latest federal government budget has an additional \$868 million for health care transfers to Ontario, and that gives me hope. I would urge Premier McGuinty to use this new federal health money to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

1510

#### SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL COLLEGIATE AND VOCATIONAL INSTITUTE

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Thunder Bay’s Sir Winston Churchill Collegiate and Vocational Institute students are making dreams come true for seniors at the Versa Care Centre. Outstanding students such as Matt Smiley and Sarah Gogal, grade 11 students from Churchill, are part of the school’s peer leadership class and new Dreamweavers program, which started in September 2008.

In the second semester, 24 students from grades 11 and 12 worked with 11 seniors. Created by peer leadership teacher Ryan McDonnell and former Versa Care Centre program manager Emily Bosma, students have been developing relationships with seniors at the home, getting to know them and determining what dream they would like help fulfilling.

Students have taken senior residents swimming. Other dreams included taking a resident to a play and treating a woman to a day at a spa with her daughter. Reuniting special people in their lives is often requested, as are learning to play the piano, seeing a special place and reliving past experiences. Dreams for fun-based activities are often requested, or simple things that can mean so much: a new dress to go to church in or a cup holder for a wheelchair.

I want to applaud the idealism and spirit of service of all the other students involved: Cathy Harmar, Christina Maitlains, Karly Olson, Dustan and Adam Zimmerman, Meighan McKillop, Erin Muller, Brennan Wright, Greg Fraser, Alex Stevenson, Janine Stajkowski, Brandon Myketa, Mark Bystrican, Evan Poile, Lloyd Claridge, Kyle Tang, Jordan Adams, Tyler Gasper, Liam McDonnell, Justin Grachowski, Joy Vanesse, Paula Marsh, Brandon Charlebois, Mitch McKillop, Devin Breukelman and Corey Hoogsteen.



## RURAL CONNECTIONS BROADBAND PROGRAM

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** It gives me great pleasure to rise and share with this House the McGuinty government's commitment to improving access to technology for all Ontarians. The McGuinty Liberals recognize that we have highly skilled workers, dedicated business owners and tremendous natural resources. A strong commitment to investing in technology is essential to achieving sustainable communities and allowing them to compete in the 21st-century economy.

The Rural Connections broadband program is a four-year, \$30-million program that will leverage municipal and private sector investments to bring high-speed Internet access to rural and remote communities, enabling Ontarians to get access to e-health, e-education and e-government services.

Rural Connections will continue to address broadband gaps across rural southern Ontario. Fifteen municipalities across southern Ontario have already qualified for over \$8.8 million in funding for broadband projects that will have a positive impact on families, enhance economic development and improve access to public services. This funding builds on the one-time \$10-million investment announced in the 2007 budget, which helped fund broadband infrastructure projects in 18 southern Ontario municipalities.

Our government recognizes that the Rural Connections broadband program is a key part in developing successful and sustainable municipalities. We recognize there is more to do. The McGuinty government will continue to work hard for all Ontarians to ensure they have the tools they need to succeed.

## LEGISLATIVE INTERNS

**Mr. Dave Levac:** With today's challenging economic times, the undeniable importance of young Ontarians' education is at the forefront of most of our minds. I can't help but look at this year's group of legislative interns and think how fortunate they are to be participating in a sponsored program that provides such a rich educational experience through exposure to the many facets of legislative, political and public life. But more importantly, as members, we are fortunate to meet such great young energetic men and women.

Since October, I have been pleased to host Emma as an intern in my office, and I have made sure to include her in as many aspects of my MPP activities as possible, since I am well aware that the internship is intended to be a period of gaining real-life experience in the many nuances of politics and serving the public. Emma has contributed to the various projects in my office, sat in on meetings and seminars, and spent time working in my constituency office, among many other activities. She tells me that this experience has been truly life-changing and has given her an opportunity to pair her academic background in public policy with practical political insights.

The internship is also non-partisan, and soon Emma will be leaving my office to work with a member of the opposition. While I'll miss her in my office, her learning will be enhanced through her opposition placement. That's what counts. Quality educational experiences are crucial to develop young Ontarians, particularly in the field of politics. This year's 10 legislative interns—Emma, Kim, Chelsea, Rosanne, Meghan, Angela, Igor, David, Waqas and Tejas—are fortunate to be able to gain, through this program, such a rich educational experience in provincial politics. More importantly, as members, we are fortunate to have had these bright, young political enthusiasts among us.

Let us all thank the interns, the coordinating team and the sponsors of this great program.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** I beg leave to present a report on the Ontario sex offender registry from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and move the adoption of its recommendations.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** First of all, I want to thank the clerk, the research staff and all the members of the committee for their hard work.

This registry is run by the Ontario Provincial Police. There are over 8,500 individuals registered on the registry. It has about a 95% compliance rate, and Ontario is the only province that has a registry.

Some of the areas reviewed include: Many sex offenders in federal custody and incarcerated in Ontario are not being registered. This is one of the key problems, as well as follow-up on non-compliance offenders.

The report includes 14 key recommendations, which include but are not limited to verifying that individuals have actually been moved out of Ontario, because then, they're deregistered from the registry, as well as to find out how the ministry will better be able to aid the police in investigations relating to the sex registry.

Having said that, I move adjournment of the debate.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Debate adjourned.*

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** I beg leave to present a report on the fish and wildlife program from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and move the adoption of its recommendations.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** We reviewed a number of key areas within the ministry and made 14 specific recommendations and asked for a 120-day response time. They included invasive species, proper moose management to ensure that tag allocation represents moose populations in a number of areas, ensuring that volunteer hatcheries continue to work with the ministry and also ensuring that diseases are not introduced to provincial waters, and of course enforcement with the conservation officers and ensuring that they have the proper number of officers and the time required.

Having said that, I move adjournment of the debate.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Debate adjourned.*

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### TRUTH ABOUT CALEDONIA ACT, 2009

#### LOI DE 2009 CONCERNANT LA VÉRITÉ SUR CALEDONIA

Mr. Barrett moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 146, An Act to provide for a public inquiry to determine the truth about the administration of justice, law enforcement and the ownership of land within the former Haldimand Tract and nearby areas / *Projet de loi 146, Loi prévoyant une enquête publique pour établir la vérité sur l'administration de la justice, l'exécution de la loi et la propriété de biens-fonds dans les limites de l'ancien terrain de Haldimand et dans les zones environnantes.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** By way of explanation, a short title is the Truth About Caledonia Act, 2009. The bill requires the Premier to recommend to the Lieutenant Governor in Council that a commission be appointed to inquire into land disputes and other related activities in the former Haldimand Tract and nearby areas.

It's the role of the commission to inquire into and report on the administration of justice, law enforcement and the ownership of land. It's also the role of the commission to make recommendations directed to the prevention of attempts of intimidation and related behaviour in similar circumstances. The commission is given powers under the Public Inquiries Act. Once the inquiry begins, the commission must make an interim report in six months and a final report in 12 months.

1520

## HOLODOMOR MEMORIAL DAY ACT, 2009

### LOI DE 2009 SUR LE JOUR COMMÉMORATIF DE L'HOLODOMOR

Mr. Levac moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 147, An Act to proclaim Holodomor Memorial Day / *Projet de loi 147, Loi proclamant le Jour commémoratif de l'Holodomor.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** If passed, the Holodomor Memorial Day Act will become the first-ever tri-sponsored bill. The honourable member from Newmarket–Aurora, Frank Klees, and the member from Parkdale–High Park, Cheri DiNovo, have agreed to co-sponsor this bill. If passed, the bill will provide for the declaration of Holodomor Memorial Day on the fourth Saturday of November in each year in the province of Ontario. It will extend an annual commemoration of the victims of the Holodomor to Ontario. A memorial day will provide an opportunity to reflect on and to educate the public about crimes against humanity that occurred in Ukraine from 1932 to 1933, in which as many as 10 million Ukrainians perished.

## PETITIONS

### ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I have here a petition that was sent to me by Bert Vorstenbosch, a proud pork producer from Mitchell and a proud Rotarian, by his business card. The petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Honourable Leona Dombrowsky, has publicly stated that she 'absolutely' wants to help the beginning and new entrants to agriculture; and

"Whereas beginning and expanding farmers are going to be important in the coming decade, as a record number of producers are expected to leave the industry; and

"Whereas the safety net payments—i.e., Ontario cattle, hog and horticulture payments (OCHHP)—are based on historical averages, and many beginning and expanding farmers were not in business or just starting up in the period so named and thus do not have reflective historic allowable net sales; and

"Whereas beginning and expanding producers are likely at the greatest risk of being financially disadvantaged by poor market conditions and are being forced to



exit agriculture because there is not a satisfactory safety net program of payment that meets their needs;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately adjust the safety net payments made via the OCHHP to include beginning and expanding farmers, and make a relief payment to the beginning and expanding farmers who have been missed or received seriously disproportionate payments, thereby preventing beginning farmers from exiting the agriculture sector."

It's signed by a great number of constituents in Ontario. We thank them for presenting this petition and we thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to present it to this Legislature.

### PROTECTION FOR MINERS

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Member from Scarborough Southwest—oh, the member from Nickel Belt.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Did I give you the evil eye?

"Whereas the current legislation contained in the Ontario health and safety act and regulations for mines and mining plants does not adequately protect the lives of miners, we request revisions to the act;

"Lyle Everett Defoe and the scoop tram he was operating fell 150 feet down an open stope (July 23, 2007). Lyle was 25 years and 15 days old when he was killed at Xstrata Kidd Creek mine site, Timmins.

The mining regulation "states that, 'A shaft, raise or other opening in an underground mine shall be securely fenced, covered or otherwise guarded'.... The stope where Lyle was killed was protected by a length of orange plastic snow fence and a rope with a warning sign. These barriers would not have been visible if the bucket of the scoop tram was raised. Lyle's body was recovered from behind the scoop tram.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Concrete berms must be mandatory to protect all open stopes and raises;

"All miners and contractors working underground must have working communication devices and personal locators;

"All equipment involved in injuries and fatalities must be recovered and examined unless such recovery would endanger the lives of others; and

"The entire act must be reviewed and amended to better protect underground workers."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and send it to the Clerks' table with page Rachel.

### POPE JOHN PAUL II

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** I have a petition, and it's addressed to the Parliament of Ontario.

"Whereas the legacy of Pope John Paul II reflects his lifelong commitment to international understanding, peace and the defence of equality and human rights;

"Whereas his legacy has an all-embracing meaning that is particularly relevant to Canada's multi-faith and multicultural traditions;

"Whereas, as one of the great spiritual leaders of contemporary times, Pope John Paul II visited Ontario during his pontificate of more than 25 years and, on his visits, was enthusiastically greeted by Ontario's diverse religious and cultural communities;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to grant speedy passage into law of the private member's bill by Oak Ridges MPP Frank Klees entitled An Act to proclaim Pope John Paul II Day."

I affix my signature to it, as I agree with it.

### CHILD CARE

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to present a petition from my riding of Durham which reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services, Madeleine Meilleur, has decided that grandparents caring for their grandchildren no longer qualify for temporary care assistance; and

"Whereas the removal of the temporary care assistance could mean that children will be forced into foster care; and

"Whereas the temporary care assistance amounted to \$231 per month, much less than a foster family would receive to look after the same children if they were forced into foster care;"

Therefore, "we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately reverse the decision to remove temporary care assistance for grandparents looking after their grandchildren."

I am pleased to sign and support this and present it to Patrick, one of the new pages.

### HOSPICES

**Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas hospices on church or hospital property do not pay taxes; and

"Whereas hospices are not-for-profit organizations providing emotional, spiritual and bereavement support and respite care to terminally ill individuals and their family members; and

"Whereas a residential hospice (usually an eight- to 10-bed home-like facility) provides around-the-clock care to terminally ill individuals and support to their families; and

"Whereas hospice services are ... free of charge;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to allow hospices across the province to be exempt from municipal taxes."

I agree with this and will sign my signature and bring it to the table with Grace.

## ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I have signatures on a petition titled "Safety Net Payments and Beginning and Expanding Farmers."

"Whereas the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Honourable Leona Dombrowsky, has publicly stated that she 'absolutely' wants to help the beginning and new entrants to agriculture; and

"Whereas beginning and expanding farmers are going to be important in the coming decade, as a record number of producers are expected to leave the industry; and

"Whereas the safety net payments—i.e., Ontario cattle, hog and horticulture payments (OCHHP)—are based on historical averages, and many beginning and expanding farmers were not in business or just starting up in the period so named and thus do not have reflective historic allowable net sales (ANS); and

"Whereas beginning and expanding producers are likely at the greatest risk of being financially disadvantaged by poor market conditions and being forced to exit agriculture because there is not a satisfactory safety net program or payment that meets their needs;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately adjust the safety net payments made via the OCHHP to include beginning and expanding farmers, and make a relief payment to the beginning and expanding farmers who have been missed or received seriously disproportionate payments, thereby preventing beginning farmers from exiting the agriculture sector."

These petitions were gathered by Corner Ridge Farms Ltd., St. Marys, and I affix my signature in support.

1530

## FIREARMS CONTROL

**Mr. Mike Colle:** In response to a lot of senseless drive-by shootings in the city of Toronto, I have a petition.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the growing number of" guns found "in motor vehicles is threatening innocent citizens and our police officers;

"Whereas police officers, military personnel and ... licensed personnel" should be "allowed to possess firearms; and

"Whereas a growing number of" guns "are transported, smuggled and being found in" cars; and

"Whereas impounding" cars "and suspending driver's licences of persons possessing" illegal guns "would aid the police in their efforts to make our streets safer;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 56, entitled the Unlawful Firearms in Vehicles Act..., into law so that we can reduce the number of crimes involving" illegal guns "in our communities."

I support this petition and I affix my name to it.

## MOTORCYCLE SAFETY

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I have here a petition that was sent to me by Glen Hall in Ingersoll, and it is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas to impose a total ban on an activity or sport under the guise of protecting the public from injury as presented by MPP Helena Jaczek in Bill 117 to amend the Highway Traffic Act, section 38.1, 'No person shall drive or operate a motorcycle on a highway if another person under the age of 14 years is a passenger on the motorcycle,' would be an injustice to us, the people of Ontario; and

"Whereas the restrictive aspects of this proposal far outweigh the minor risks associated and confirmed by the annual Ministry of Transportation statistical safety reports, and further, there is no clear distinction that 'motorcycle-related injuries' apply to Ontario streets or highways, as stated in defence of Bill 117;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly ... as follows:

"Request that Bill 117 be rejected and not become law."

Thank you very much for allowing me to present this petition.

BATHURST HEIGHTS  
ADULT LEARNING CENTRE

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I have a petition from Walter and all the staff and students at Bathurst Heights Adult Learning Centre. This is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas there are over 2,000 adult ESL students being served by the Bathurst Heights Adult Learning Centre, operated by the Toronto District School Board, in partnership with the province of Ontario; and

"Whereas this is the only English-as-a-second-language ... learning centre in this area of the city located directly on the Spadina subway line, making it accessible for students" from right across the GTA; and

"Whereas newcomers" to "Toronto, and in the Lawrence Heights area, need the Bathurst Heights Adult Learning Centre so they can succeed in their career opportunities; and

"Whereas the proposed revitalization" plan for "Lawrence Heights threatens the existence of the centre;

"Therefore we, the undersigned," ask "that any revitalization of Lawrence Heights include a newcomer centre and ensure that the Bathurst Heights centre continues to exist in the present location."

## SALES TAX

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I have a petition from my riding of Durham, which is the home of the automobile, you might say. It says:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas potential automobile customers in Ontario are having trouble accessing credit and loans; and



"Whereas the North American automotive industry is having difficulty selling vehicles; and

"Whereas the province of Ontario has recently lost more than 270,000 jobs in the manufacturing sector alone; and

"Whereas the auto industry in Canada supports an estimated 440,000 jobs, including in that the auto sector parts sector and dealership sector, and generates many billions of dollars in annual tax revenue;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Dalton McGuinty government to introduce a sales tax holiday in the next Ontario provincial budget for the purchase of North American manufactured vehicles."

I'm pleased to submit this and sign it and endorse it and present it to Alexander, one of the new, rather tall, pages.

### SALES TAX

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** This petition is titled "Implement a Sales Tax Holiday for Vehicle Sales." Its signatures were gathered at the Rick McCall GM dealership in Simcoe.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas potential automobile customers in North America are having trouble accessing credit and loans; and

"Whereas the automotive industry is having difficulty selling vehicles;

"We, the undersigned, petition provincial, federal and state governments to implement a sales tax holiday on the purchase of new and used cars and trucks."

There are signatures here from Brantford, Waterford, Woodhouse township, Cambridge and, of course, Simcoe.

I sign this petition.

### CHILD CARE

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It's a pleasure to have the opportunity to present all these petitions today.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services, Madeleine Meilleur, has decided that grandparents caring for their grandchildren no longer qualify for temporary care assistance; and

"Whereas the removal of the temporary care assistance could mean that children will be forced into foster care; and

"Whereas the temporary care assistance amounted to \$231 per month, much less than a foster family would receive to look after the same children if they were forced into foster care;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately reverse the decision to remove temporary care assistance for grandparents looking after their grandchildren."

I'm pleased to sign, to endorse this petition and present it to Maddie, one of the new pages from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2009

#### LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LES SERVICES À L'ENFANCE ET À LA FAMILLE

Resuming the debate adjourned on February 17, 2009, on the motion for third reading of Bill 103, An Act to amend the Child and Family Services Act and to make amendments to other Acts/ Projet de loi 103, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfance et à la famille et apportant des modifications à d'autres lois.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further debate?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I rise today to speak to Bill 103, youth justice.

As my colleague said yesterday, the bill forces us to have the necessary discussion about what effective system would enforce youth justice. We all have the responsibility for public safety, to ensure that we protect the right of everyone to live without fear in their communities. I realize that we won't be returning to the days of unlocked doors to our homes and cars, but we should be able to return to the days when we could safely walk the streets to our homes at any time of the day or night.

Often, victims of crime are working people who don't have the means to protect themselves in gated communities or through private security systems. We have the responsibility to do everything possible to prevent crime against these people and to ensure that those who perpetrate these crimes take full responsibility for what they have done.

In many cases, youth who become involved in the justice system have come through very difficult situations, often growing up in poverty or in sexually or physically abusive situations or struggling with alcoholism or mental illness—their own or their parents'. These youth could come from any of our communities. They might be the children of our neighbours, they might be classmates of our children, or they might attend your local school.

We have to recognize that we have a general responsibility to the youth of today in their social situation, their education and within the justice system too, even when it is difficult to see them as youth, even when we feel that their actions, which are well beyond their years, deserve a different severity of sentence. This responsibility entails taking an approach to youth justice in a way that is effective and based on the knowledge that has been accumulated here and in other jurisdictions. We must agree on an approach which ensures that in the

pursuit of justice and appropriate actions, unwarranted harm is not done.

I'd like to discuss some recommendations and questions about the process which we brought up in the committee hearings on this bill.

Open detention: One of the issues raised by our committee member was that we need to be careful about using language that applies to the adult justice system in a youth justice bill. The NDP echoed the calls of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth and the organization Justice for Children and Youth when it came to open detention. Young offenders are not adults and cannot, and should not, be treated the same way. Custody is a disruptive and sometimes traumatic experience that can have negative future consequences for a young person. The last thing we want to do on our watch is create worse circumstances for a kid who is already having trouble in the system. That's why the issue of detention cannot be a hastily decided one.

Keeping in mind the Youth Criminal Justice Act, YCJA, which talks about least intrusive means, we reiterate that open detention should be the first point of entry to the system.

1540

This must also include provisions which take into consideration where secure detention may be used—instances where there is a need to ensure that a young person will appear in court or where secure detention is necessary in the name of public or personal safety.

While in secure detention, a program that will clearly show offenders the ramifications of their situation should be implemented. They also should receive counselling on how to avoid negative peer pressure to stay out of further trouble with the law.

When these youth are in secure detention, they must be protected from the aggressions of older youth. For example, a 14-year-old should not be in with an 18- or 19-year-old. Youth should only be in secure detention with other youth within a year or two of their own age, providing that the other youth is not in for a much more serious crime.

Furthermore, we want to ensure that young people 16 or older are not exempt from the safeguards contemplated in the use of secure isolation, as set out in this bill. The Child and Family Services Act standards protect young people in vulnerable situations, and there should be no—I repeat, no—exemptions made to the CFSA standards.

Lack of consultation with the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth: The Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth was very concerned about not being consulted in the drafting of Bill 103, a concern deeply felt by our party. The advocate's office was told that this bill was created to address just "housekeeping issues." This is clearly not the case.

The first reading of the bill was on September 29, 2008, and the advocate attended the ministry briefing on September 30, 2008, where on the presentation deck it stated that the Office of the Provincial Advocate for

Children and Youth was consulted, when in fact the office was never consulted about Bill 103. This misrepresentation of the facts about consultation with the provincial watchdog agency raises very serious concerns. Why was the provincial advocate not consulted and why did the government misrepresent this in its official briefing? The government must be brought to account for this—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I heard a word that is not normally used with reference—

**Mr. Paul Miller:** "Misrepresented"?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Yes, that's right. I'd like you to withdraw that.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Okay, I'll withdraw "misrepresented."

The only consultation any employee of the Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth recalled was participating in a committee back in 2003 or 2004 that focused on secure isolation, not the content of Bill 103. I quote Irwin Elman: "The Office of Child and Family Service Advocacy did not then nor does our office now support the ministry's approach to the use of secure isolation for people over the age of 16."

During the initial briefing on the bill, the advocate requested a copy of Bill 103, but the advocate never received one from the ministry. How can the government explain this unacceptable behaviour?

When the advocate did obtain a copy of the bill, the advocate was surprised to see that the bill proposed changes not only to the Child and Family Services Act, but more so, it proposed changes to the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth Act. These changes to the act that governs the advocate's office were laid out without an iota of consultation nor consent from the Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth.

As the advocate put it in his own words—not mine, his own words—"When I was briefed—I want to make this clear because it's a very important point—I was not told that the legislation that governs my office was going to be amended. Not a word. It amounted, to me, to somebody coming into my house, rearranging the furniture, even if they thought it was for the best, and not telling me, not gaining my permission, not telling me even after the fact. I'm going to come home, see that my furniture was changed and say, 'Oh, there it goes. It was just minor housekeeping.'" It's not respectful, and it's not okay.

This whole process is even more concerning because during the course of the hearings it was discovered that the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth has had difficulty accessing information from the ministry in general—information as simple as a list of the licensed group homes in the province. This is absolutely unacceptable and should be corrected immediately.

We are firm in our position that there be unobstructed ability for the advocate to do his job. To quote again: "I would say to the minister, because I know the minister and the ministry are afraid to let the bad things out, that



unless you let the bad things out, you can't allow the good things in. There will be—this is my experience—a balance between the good that comes out, the really good things that happen in child welfare, and the bad. But this game of trying to stonewall and obfuscate facts and prevent young people from speaking out and learning about the acts of violence that have happened against them has got to end, and I believe the committee has a chance to do that today.”

During the NDP's participation in the committee we had the opportunity to put on record that we are interested in transparency and accountability mechanisms in the best interests of the children, youth, public safety and justice. We all want to reduce youth crime, particularly violent crime and its serious impacts on community members.

I was raised in Stoney Creek. When I was growing up, you could leave your doors unlocked. Everybody's parent was your parent. Even your peers could control situations that could get bad. These times don't exist anymore. People are turning their backs when crimes are committed because they are afraid of reprisals. The street gangs try to intimidate people and actually follow through on their threats in some cases. Our society has become a dangerous one. Parents, policing organizations, social workers, politicians and youth have to work together to make our streets safe again.

When I was growing up, sports played a big part in my life. It taught me teamwork; it taught me discipline; it taught me respect for my fellow players. Our youth should be enrolled in more of these sports programs across this province, healthy environments where they can grow into law-abiding, well-rounded individuals with respect for our laws. When I was growing up there was also good access to recreation activities. Sadly, in the last 12 years, municipalities have had many provincial costs dumped on their citizens, and one of the ripple effects has been the closure of and limited access to those recreational facilities that our generation enjoyed.

In my riding of Hamilton East–Stoney Creek we have good library access, which includes computer access and training, but the most notable program in our area is operated by the Hamilton East Kiwanis Boys' and Girls' Club, financed through government grants. It only costs \$5 per year for a child to join, and it has extended hours, basketball courts, a swimming pool, Internet access, video games, ping pong tables, art workshops and many other activities available for youth. Parents are also encouraged to become involved in the club's activities. The club also provides, for shift-working parents, a place the children can call home where they feel welcomed, protected and free of intimidation. There should be more clubs like this all through our province.

We also have a CATCH program, funded by the federal government, and fundraising activities, an after-school program for youth up to their mid- and sometimes late teens. There are also recreational sport activities in the program, and one of our most noted members of the club became a Canadian Idol. Mr. Melo came from this

very club—quite an achievement for a boy who was challenged with some difficulties. All the kids in that neighbourhood had difficulties they were challenged with; exceptionally done on his part. Additionally, this past summer my constituency office staff, Shirley Alvarez and Todd White, coached a tee ball team for four- to seven-year-olds. The parents were very engaged in the team's activities, bringing a positive home environment to the field.

But there should be more of these programs funded by the province with a goal of redirecting youth away from criminal activity. Youth criminal justice should be based on prevention, rehabilitation and public safety, and informed by evidence, not on ill-founded assumptions about the merits of punishment and the possibilities of deterrence. To quote the John Howard Society paper where it outlines in detail: “Sentencing severity has no meaningful general deterrent value for young people, or anyone for that matter. People who commit crimes simply do not consider the length of sentence they might face when making this often split-second decision.”

1550

The John Howard Society WorkPath program in Hamilton helps youth to complete job applications, jobs training and workshops—and social and oral interview skills. The society also does an adult diversion program, bail verification and supervision programs, crime prevention programs and the Hamilton youth drug diversion program, just to name a few. It also has a youth justice committee involving trained community members who meet with victims and youth to find resolutions to their minor offences before they get worse. In particular, for youth who commit serious crimes, rates of reoffence are the same regardless of the severity of the sentencing.

We have to look at the root of the problem and we have to attack it at the source. The reality is that youth who commit crimes are people who have high impulsivity, low self-control and, often, mental health concerns and addictions. They are not in a position to make rational cost-benefit analyses before committing their crimes. We believe that the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth has an active and critical role to play in youth justice.

As the reports on the roots of youth violence have stated, there are a number of foundational issues—poverty, racism and, again, mental health issues—which are at the core of the circumstances for youth criminals, which we must address as a Legislature. The investments have to be made to tackle these issues from the core.

But the issue on hand is what to do for some youth when the crime has already been committed. What do we do for those kids? The NDP supports a balanced approach to youth justice that ensures public safety and maximizes opportunities for the rehabilitation and community reintegration of youth, no matter how lost they may seem. These kids need our help. They need it now.

Our streets have become terrifying: the drive-by shootings, the younger kids committing the crimes.



They're being dragged into these gangs and told that this is how you get your self-esteem: "You're part of our family." You go out and commit a crime or do something to someone, and you're now accepted. What they don't understand is that they're now under the control of these gangs because they have committed a crime, and they'll threaten to go to the police and turn them in if they don't do what they're told.

Our kids have to be educated. They have to understand what they're getting into when they are approached by these gangs or approached by people who have ill thoughts. We can stop it at the source. These kids are very impressionable from age eight to, say, 15. That's where you've got to get these source programs now, and hit them before these other gangs get a hold of them, because we have to eliminate this.

You and I know that you were a lot safer when you used to walk down the streets of Toronto 20 or 25 years ago. You didn't feel worried or intimidated. The police were always in control of situations. But now, with the guns and the gangs and all these things that are going on, even the police are pushed to the limit on how they can control these situations. They do the best they can, but it seems to be getting worse and worse. We have to also tighten up the border and the influx of these firearms—handguns.

I'd like to end by just saying that there are a lot of good points to this bill. There were a couple of amendments and things we would have liked to have seen, but on the whole, we will be supporting this bill.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** It's a pleasure to have an opportunity to have two minutes to comment on the remarks made by the member from the riding of Hamilton East. I was listening to him very carefully and I just wanted to comment on a few aspects of what he had to say.

With respect to the child advocate, I would, with respect, say that I think the child advocate's role continues to be strengthened through this government. We put through legislation last term which made the child advocate independent, not reporting to a minister but reporting directly here to the Legislature. That's a big difference because in the past, if you reported to a minister, if the minister didn't like what the report said, then the minister could withhold the report, or at least not have to bring it forward.

By doing what this government did, the child advocate's information becomes public to everybody, especially to this body or this chamber, this Legislature. He or she—right now it's he—reports here and gives us information as to what is happening. We had extensive hearings on that, and I think the people who were previous child advocates were happy with the new level of independence that was put in. As far as that goes, I think that stays in place with minor technical amendments that do not affect the advocate's powers.

The other issue is the broader one involving children and youth and getting them involved. This government has taken the step of creating an entire ministry of services for youth and a minister responsible for that area. It shows the importance we have given to that area. We know it's a problem—we know it's a challenge, rather than a problem—and we know that by putting a ministry and a minister in place, hopefully we can get some answers soon.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I would like to make a few brief comments on the member's remarks this afternoon. I appreciate his comments with respect to examining not just what this bill is taking a look at directly, but also examining some of the causes of youth violence and youth getting involved in gangs—how impressionable they are.

Certainly this is something we in the PC caucus have taken very seriously for a number of years. Time for Action was published in 2005, and contained some very thoughtful comments and suggestions that we, as the official opposition, wanted to put forward as ways one can counter some of the roots of youth violence, which of course were never acted on by this government.

Now we have yet another report, the Curling-McMurtry report, which makes several significant amendments to the youth criminal justice laws and some suggestions for ways one can engage youth and keep youth from becoming involved in gangs. Not all of it do I agree with, but certainly there are some major parts of it that I think bear serious review. I hope the government is going to take further action on this, because I agree with the member that there are some very serious problems with youth. We need to engage them; we need to get them involved in communities. We need them to see that there is another path to be followed besides the way of guns and gangs—we can see it on our streets every day.

We need to take some serious action—the sooner the better—not just with bills such as this one, which is important because it does bring about the important administrative changes we need to see in the youth criminal justice system, but we also need to take some substantive action. I would certainly urge the government to take a look at that, in this respect, to give voice to the Curling-McMurtry report and the very significant recommendations it makes, and to move forward with that as quickly as possible.

I thank the member for bringing forward these important suggestions.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I agree with everything the member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek said. There are a couple of remarks I wanted to respond to. One of them is the lack of consultation with the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth. It is a serious slight on that office and the person who holds the office. If we believe that what he or she does—depending on who is in that



position—is important for children, then we need to involve that person on a regular basis. The fact that she was not involved—

**Interjection:** He.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I beg your pardon. The fact that he was not involved speaks to the problem of what it means to have such a position. If and when we do a review, as we've done with Bill 103, trying to unify those individuals who are 16 and 17 with those aged 12 through 15 in a way that provides some programming, not to use the expertise of that individual doesn't make any sense to me, and why the government did that does not make any sense. We need to review that, and we need to talk about it. I'll be speaking in a couple of minutes, and I will have a few more things to say about that.

The other thing the member from Hamilton East spoke about was prevention. We spend a whole lot of time on punishment rather than what we can do to prevent a crime from happening. It makes us all feel good to punish those who commit misdeeds. I'm one of them too, because if something were to happen to me, my first instinct would be to punish back. It's the easiest instinct to arouse in human beings, but we spend little time at prevention. That is where the focus of politicians and governments should be, and I say to you, spend more time at that. I congratulate the member for speaking about those things.

1600

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** I first of all want to thank the member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek for his support of the bill. Certainly, when he said that youth are not adults, he was absolutely right, which is why the transformation is taking place in the youth justice system. We felt it was appropriate for youth to be housed with other youth rather than in youth units within the adult system.

Certainly when the member talks about some of the issues—and I heard further about the child advocate—I think it's very important that we continue to work with the child advocate. We need to have a working relationship that moves forward on behalf of children, and that's a very, very important part of our lives.

The member talked about what it was like at one time, when we didn't have to lock our doors and we didn't have to worry about our cars, and it's sometimes a little bit like that still in rural areas. We still manage to get away with that once in a while. But one of the things that was always very true in that nostalgic time of not worrying about locking the doors was the big deterrent of the ride home in a police car. Nobody wanted to arrive home in a police car if they had been bad and had done something that wasn't appropriate, so things have changed quite a bit.

We need to deal now with the realities of our lives as they are today, so we need to talk about things such as open detention and secure detention, when is it appropriate, and is it appropriate to—as much as we presume

that open detention should be the initial step taken, there are occasions where we may need to go into secure detention initially, and it should be the prerogative of the provincial director to make that decision in the event that the offender may be a danger to himself or herself or to society or to staff.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. The member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, you have two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Thank you. I'd like to thank my colleagues from all parties for their comments. They've been well taken.

Just in reference to the child advocate situation, the member from Scarborough Southwest mentioned that he was glad to see they had separated the child advocate from the ministry, that he was a separate entity and was able to access public records and make decisions for himself. That's fine. However, the child advocate should also be informed. If they're not sharing information or not inviting him to meetings that are critical in bill changes and he didn't know anything about it, maybe there still should be some kind of connection or mandatory rules that they have to notify the child advocate of any changes whatsoever. If he doesn't know what's going on, he can't report to the public.

I would maybe want to add a little amendment to that suggestion or to the discussion the member had made that we should have a mandatory situation where the child advocate will be notified of any changes affecting his line of work or affecting any other bill that may involve children. I think everybody should know what's going on and be rowing with the same oars. But I recognize that some of his comments were good.

I hope he would consider that suggestion in the future, when he's separating ministries or separating the responsibilities and moving it into a separate pocket, that separate pocket must be well informed at all times to be able to do his job properly, now that he has his own title, his own independence. But we wouldn't want to obstruct his ability to do his job because of the lack of information.

I'll end by once again thanking all the members for their comments.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** It is a pleasure to speak to this bill—indeed, any bill—and I always want to take the opportunity to welcome the citizens of Ontario to this parliamentary channel. Yes, we are live; we're on live again. It's good to be back in the Legislature to give people the opportunity to see us, to hear us, to engage as you're eating your popcorn and wine in the evening, if that's what you're doing, because this is one of the best places to connect to as a way of staying alive, as a way of feeling alive.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Popcorn is okay. Popcorn with wine, I'm not quite sure—you're right—but without the popcorn, the wine is good. Red wine is better. In my



view, red wine has better qualities for your health than white, as a rule. Now, there are those who like white. That's not a big deal, it's not a problem. Me, I stick to red. So welcome. It's 4:05, Wednesday afternoon, debating Bill 103, the youth justice bill.

I want to tell you that for many years we have had two distinctly different youth justice systems. The young people who were 12 to 15 at the time of the offence were administered by the Ministry of Community and Social Services, while those who were 16 to 17 at the time of the offence were under the supervision of the Ministry of Correctional Services. Finally, this particular bill brings these people, these young offenders aged 12 to 17, under one roof, and we believe, as New Democrats, that is a positive thing to do.

The 16- and 17-year-olds for many, many years were in limbo and had been a longstanding issue for quite some time. They were not privy to many of the programs that they should have been getting as a way of dealing, hopefully, with preventing future crime from happening. So this is a useful thing that the government has done.

I want to speak to the issues of crime in general because we all have a unique perspective on this particular issue. We all have a responsibility, of course, to public safety, to ensure that all people have the right to live without fear in their communities. I am convinced that we all feel the same way, that there's nobody in this Legislature—Conservative, New Democrat or Liberal—who doesn't feel the same way with issues of our responsibility to public safety. We all have a responsibility to make sure that we prevent the crime and to ensure that those who perpetuate crimes take responsibility for what they have done. I don't know whether I said "perpetuate" or "perpetrate."

**Mr. Paul Miller:** "Perpetrate" is the right one.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** "Perpetrate" is the word, and that should have been the word that I used in the event that I didn't.

We also want to reduce youth crime, particularly violent crime, and its serious impacts on our community members. We are all committed to that. My concern in general around these particular issues is that there is a fear-based approach to crime that I want to speak to. We are all subject to this fear response to crime. It assumes that the reason for increased youth crime is lax penalties and punishment, and there are a whole lot of people, particularly of the Conservative bent, who believe that to be the case and that to be the problem. Now, there are some Conservatives in this Legislature who don't say that, but there are some who do. I heard my friend from Whitby—Oshawa briefly, in two minutes, talking about making sure the government listens to the recommendations of Roy McMurtry, which speak to prevention—and that's a good thing. It's wonderful to hear members of the Conservative Party speak to these issues. But on the whole, when I hear Conservative politicians, what they talk about is the fact that we are not strong enough in our punishing of criminals. Be it petty or hard criminals or whatever the misdemeanour is, they want to

punish people. It doesn't matter how, they just want to punish them hard.

1610

I don't believe that. I really don't believe that's the right approach. It assumes that a shift from rehabilitation to denunciation and punishment will lead to reduced crime, and we don't believe that. It makes us feel good, I understand that, because when you see it, there are a whole lot of other people out there who are saying, "Right on; we've got to punish them." It's an easy reflex to get involved with. It's almost instinctual. Someone hurts you and you want to hurt back. You don't question why it happened and you don't ask why and what we could do; you simply want to punish the wrongdoer. I just think that that is the wrong approach to dealing with issues of crime.

I speak to it because these are the things that people talk about. I'll talk about one or two other issues contained in the bill, but most people don't want to talk about that. Most people don't want to talk about, I suspect, whether the provincial advocate for children is involved or not. It may be esoteric for many. The issue of crime is simple for most people: "Are you punishing adequately or not?" Because if you put them away, then that wrongdoer is going to be put away for a long, long time, and that deals with the problem—it's gone.

It's never the case. The problem isn't gone. It comes back. In the same way when we push kids out of our educational system and we expel them for two or three or four weeks, they come back. If you don't deal with the problem, the problem is back in your classroom and you, the teacher, the vice-principal and principal have to deal with it again. You can put them in jail for a year, and if you punish the wrongdoer in jail, he or she will come out and they'll do it again, and you have to put them back in jail. You have to pay anywhere from \$50,000 to \$100,000 to keep somebody in jail, whereas every dollar you spend on prevention is multiplied manyfold in terms of future costs—social, psychological, criminal and so on. Keep people out of jails and it saves people's time and money. It saves lives. It helps people to rebuild. It helps people to prevent. That's what it's about. That's what it should be.

There is not an epidemic of youth crime out there. There isn't. There is crime, no doubt, but it has diminished. For the victims, it doesn't matter whether it's diminished 50% or 70%, because if it happened to you, that's all that matters: the one time. All you're concerned about is, "What happened to me and how do I seek vengeance on those who punished me?"

The fact of the matter is, crimes have gone down, and that's a good thing. It doesn't mean that those crimes that are perpetrated are good, that we accept them. We don't. Punishment does not prevent or reduce crime. I admit, it makes us feel better, but it doesn't prevent or reduce crime.

The quote that my colleague from Stoney Creek read from the John Howard Society is a good one, and I want to repeat it: "Sentencing severity has no meaningful



general deterrent value for young people or anyone, for that matter. People who commit crimes simply do not consider the length of the sentence they might face when making this often split-second decision."

I believe that, and everybody knows it. If somebody is going to commit a crime, he or she doesn't say, "Is it six months or is it a year? Is it a year and a half or two? Is it two and a half or three? Is it four?" They don't do that. They commit the crime. The question is, why do they do that and what can we do to prevent it, and who are the people who commit the crimes? Are they healthy people who have healthy lives?

There are a lot of crooks at the white-collar level working in investment places. I understand that. They come from good families. They generally don't get caught, and they generally make the big bucks. The ones who get caught are poor kids. Poor kids get caught often, and young people with mental illness get caught often. Young people who have been sexually abused by their relatives or someone very close to them and end up turning to crime get caught. Young people who come out of homes where there is alcohol abuse or any kind of substance abuse get caught. Generally, they come from a certain low social stratum. We know this, Liberals know it, Tories know it—we all know it—and yet we do very little to deal with issues of poverty.

If I am a poor young man and I live in a poor housing complex where there's a great deal of poverty in my community, where my mother works two or three jobs every night, where the housing situation is completely inadequate—living in squalor in some cases—I'm going to have a hell of a time. I'm not going to have a nice family background where I say, "Oh yes, I want to be the President of the United States; I want to be the Prime Minister of Canada." When you're living in difficult economic circumstances, whether you are sexually abused or your parents are drinking or you're very poor for a long, long time and you're living in squalor, you're not going to come out of that situation saying, "I want to be a lawyer." Some do, but they are few. The majority are trapped in socioeconomic circumstances from which they cannot escape.

People talk about families and responsibilities of families as if somehow it's easy for each and every parent to be a good parent. If I have the luxury of making \$100,000 or \$150,000 or \$200,000 or \$300,000, I'm going to have better access to services, better access to education, better ability to sit down with my child and say, "How are you doing today? What book are we going to read tonight? Don't worry about the food that's laid on the table for you by somebody who's serving it. Don't worry. Let's go read a book." If you're earning the good bucks, you're not going to have a problem talking about what mom and dad can do.

For those who live in luxury to say that poor people have a responsibility and an obligation to raise their children well, as if they're not even trying, is a profound assault on poor people who are working hard to do the best for themselves and their families and to raise their

kids. How often and how easy it is to attack poor men, poor women, poor family members who do their best on low-income salaries. It is so easy to attack them and say they've got to do a better job. We, the rich, can give so much good advice to the poor on what they should be doing.

Let's deal with issues of housing. If people don't have adequate housing, they're not going to feel good. If you ghettoize entire communities in one area where there is poverty, racism—persistent racism—mental illness, sexual abuse, substance abuse and the whole deal of drug addiction that goes circulating in communities, we need to help them. That's where we need to deal with prevention. We're not doing much of that.

Oh yes, we do some token things from time to time. There are some programs that we do here and there. We now, by the way, provide policemen in schools, and we're all feeling good. There was a Star report the other day saying, "This is great," and I'm sure a whole lot of Liberals are saying, "This is great. We're going to help them by putting policemen and policewomen in schools. All of a sudden, crime is down." So everybody is feeling good. The policeman or policewoman is preventing crime from happening, so the focus doesn't become how we deal with this young man or woman who is troubled, how we provide services for the mentally ill or housing for those who are living in substandard conditions. The answer is a cop in the classroom, thus shedding the responsibility of dealing with the problems. We now have found the solution: Put a policeman in the school and you prevent more crime from happening.

Do you see what I'm getting at? We always find that easier answer, which is never the answer, but it makes us feel good. We now have policemen in schools, and it makes principals feel great—"Oh, this is great"—and everyone wants one. Everyone wants one now. Imagine having a policeman, well paid, sitting or walking or running—not running—around the school, just preventing crime—imagine, well-paid individuals—instead of doing that ounce of prevention that will save billions of dollars down the line.

1620

**Mr. Mike Colle:** It's better to have them in the schools rather than the courtroom.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I know. But Michael, I'm talking. What I'm saying to you is that we must focus our energies on prevention. We must focus our energies on poverty, mental illness and inadequate housing. These programs, adequate programs, make sure that kids, poor kids in particular, in our school system are getting the support they need to be able to get them beyond the cycle that they have been in for a long, long time. Focus our energy there.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** There are different ways.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Sure, there are different ways. Sure, but governments always look for easy solutions. Liberals particularly love that; God bless.

California counties that enforce the famous three strikes law did not show any decline in crime compared



to other states. California was going to get tough—it did get tough: “Three strikes and you’re out.” It didn’t work. Schwarzenegger and his muscles didn’t work on that kind of stuff. It doesn’t work.

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** He tried; it didn’t work.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** He tried; they’re all trying. Oh, Republican conservative types try. They’ve got more jails in America than anywhere else in the world, and they spring up like rats, like the 60 billion rats that are in Britain. My God, prisons are growing by the day in America. That’s how they deal with the problems of crime, and they’re privatized—God bless—the majority of them. It’s an institutionalized way of dealing with poverty. Don’t deal with prevention; build jails—tough on the crime and you’re done, you’re solved. That’s the way it is. Don’t focus on “We might be able to prevent this.” Look, for me, we’ve got to deal with these kinds of issues. Unless we deal with that, we’re not going to be able to solve some of the questions that I have raised.

This particular bill, in terms of merging these age groups into one category, one justice system, for me is fine, but the fact that you have excluded the child advocate was, for me, a serious, serious mistake. I say this not because I want to say it, but because the child advocate has said this himself in the report that he has submitted: “The Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth was not consulted or kept apprised during the development of Bill 103, which proposes amendments not only to the Child and Family Services Act, but also to the act that legislates the mandate of this office.”

The concerns he has raised and that others have raised are the following:

The act appears to remove from the children’s advocate the power to advocate for young persons in custody. That is a mistake. Educating young persons in custody also appears to be removed from the children’s advocate’s scope of powers. That is a mistake. There is no justification to also remove young people in custody from the group of people who should be educated about their rights.

The act also seems to remove the children’s advocate’s right to communicate with young persons in custody regarding complaints, provide advocacy to young persons in custody regarding complaints, advocate before the courts and tribunals and advocate for young persons in custody who have made the allegations of excessive use of force, assault and so on. This needs to be dealt with.

The advocate needs to have the power to deal with the questions that he has raised. The fact that MPPs cannot go into these institutions is wrong. We should be able to have access to that. The Ombudsperson, the Ombudsman, should be able to have access to these places to seek out wrongdoing and promote good practices and good prevention. These are some of the mistakes, some of the problems, we identified that need to be dealt with. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I want to respond to my friend from Trinity–Spadina and his very thought-provoking presentation. I agree with most of what he said. I don’t agree with his position on police officers in schools. It’s working very well because they are acting as prevention; they are interacting with children. Teachers like them. The parents like them. And I’d rather have a police officer in the school than have him arresting the children. So it’s working very well. I hope you give that a chance.

What I want to point to is something he talked about, and that is prevention, the sorts of role models and the things we punish and things we reward. I explained yesterday that in this park in my riding, there are young men and young girls who play soccer and play dominoes. Quite a congregation comes in the evenings and on Saturdays, especially in the summertime. What happens is, one of the gentlemen tries to sell some soup out of his truck to make a few dollars to help supplement his income, and off to the side, on the other side of the soccer pitch, there are drug dealers selling drugs.

So what happened to the poor guy selling soup, Clarence, who is trying to sell soup for \$2 to the people playing soccer and dominoes? Poor Clarence, he gets a \$150 fine for selling soup in the park, because in Toronto you can’t sell soup in the park without 10 licences. Yet the drug dealers, who are selling dope on the other side of the park, in the woods, are all laughing at Clarence and calling him a sucker because he’s selling soup and he got the \$150 fine. They are making their money selling dope in the park.

All the young people are looking at this, and what do you think they’re saying? Well, look, the police are there—and it’s not the police officer’s fault, but the police are there arresting Clarence and giving him a \$150 fine for selling soup, trying to make a decent living, and then the drug dealers are all laughing as they’re selling dope in the woods there in the park. What kind of sign is that—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O’Toole:** I’d like to respond to the member from Trinity–Spadina. He always brings humour and often a good perspective on bills.

There’s not a lot of participation on this bill because if I look at the explanatory notes, really what it’s doing here is, “The bill amends the Child and Family Services Act and the Ministry of Correctional Services Act to reflect the fact that the Ministry of Children and Youth Services assumed responsibility for youth justice services in 2004. Prior to this, the Ministry of Community and Social Services funded and operated ministry services to youth aged 12 to 15 at that time of their offence and the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services funded and operated youth justice services to youth aged 16 to 17....”

What this does is bring the two together, and in that respect I don’t think it’s much more than an administrative bill. But I think it’s interesting that they raise points about how those participants in the criminal



system, if you will, whatever their age—it's becoming more complicated.

I think there is a good reason to listen here, because if you look at the gang issue—I'm not sure, and I'm certainly not an expert, but I see the former minister here who would know this very well—this thing is a kind of compliance issue in the gangs. If you're in the gang, you've got to comply with the culture, and if it's engaged in violence or drugs or whatever it's involved in, this could precipitate into court; if they're convicted, they're in court.

Now, you're going to have 12- to 15-year-olds mixed in with 16- to 18-year-olds, and that might be the very group that might be inculcating or infiltrating, if you will, these younger children who should be protected. I think that needs to be addressed; I really do. I know this is second reading of the bill, and I would hope the minister is listening and says that there is an upside or a downside to this efficiency.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I'd first of all like to compliment my colleague from Trinity–Spadina for his, once again, passionate presentation. He made a lot of good points about dealing with the problem at the source. Yes, the police do a great job in the schools. They do need officers to attend to certain situations that become rather out of hand at times in the schools, and they should have a presence. However, he did make a strong point.

The other member from across made a point about the man selling soup in the park and getting a \$150 fine and the drug dealers don't get anything. Well, that's an easy answer: You have to have more police available for the drug squad to enforce the laws against selling drugs. I'm sure that the soup dealer could have pointed to the trees where those fellows were laughing at him, selling the drugs, and the police could have attended to it with the drug squad.

1630

I think the whole point of the member's presentation was to get to the source, and the source is when the kids are younger and they're impressionable. You can get to them through courses. You can get to them through community activity, through sports, through a little bit of tender care, a little bit of affection and a little bit of love. That goes a long way to changing a child, to moving them away from doing things that are wrong, because then they can weigh the difference between what's right and what's wrong, without peer pressure. They can talk to the counsellors in these community centres and learn the right way to do things. If they have a problem and they are getting pressure from someone out on the street, they can tell the counsellor and the counsellor can tell the police and the police can deal with it. The kids have to have an outlet; they have to have a place to go. I believe that this is just the start of many things we can do to help children.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** I listened to the member for Trinity–Spadina, and I have to say, I do agree with a lot of what he has to say. The problem is not a Liberal problem, an NDP problem or a Conservative problem; it's a problem that exists in Canada, maybe in North America. One only needs to turn on the television and see what's on television these days.

Another colleague from the NDP, the member from Niagara, I think it was, Mr. Kormos, made a comment about the Sopranos the last time we debated this bill and how people look up to the Sopranos and see them as heroes instead of something negative.

In that same context, one of the Supreme Court judges of the United States, one of the nine Supreme Court judges, went to speak in New Jersey to a group of law students who were graduating. He said—and this is a true story—when he was appointed to the Supreme Court bench in the United States, he got a phone call from a colleague in California, a judge, and the judge said to him, "Congratulations on your appointment to the Supreme Court of the United States. I hear you're from New Jersey. How close to Tony Soprano do you live?" This is a true story. He had to respond, "No, I don't live close to Tony Soprano, because Tony Soprano doesn't exist." This judge in California didn't believe him. He said, "Come on, do you live one street over or two streets over? Have you ever met the guy?" Reality and what's on television sometimes become blurred, and if it affects a judge in California, it certainly will affect a young person, and we see this a lot.

There is no easy solution. We are doing things, I think, that are appropriate. We have programs throughout Ontario, and I can think of some programs in Scarborough Southwest, that are working to make things better for youth.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. Member for Trinity–Spadina, you have two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I welcome all of the remarks by the members. To my friend from Eglinton–Lawrence, I know that some parents and teachers and principals like the fact that there are policemen in their schools; I am not one of them. I do not like the idea of having a policeman in a school—never did, never will. I think it's the wrong focus, because then the focus becomes, "Can we make sure we can afford to have more policemen in all of the schools?" rather than, "How do we deal with why young people have the problems they do?"

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** You're saying it's not one or the other, but it becomes one or the other because we never deal with issues of prevention. We never will, because that's the way politicians are: You look for the quick fix; everybody does.

The point I want to make, that I want to reinforce, is that we should be building the child rather than fixing the adult. It's not a quote of mine; it comes from another source. But that's what we should be doing: building the



child, not fixing the adult once the problem has happened.

The policeman in that school becomes the attention and the focus, and it's a distraction from the real problems we need to be dealing with. I really do believe that we need to deal with child poverty; poverty in general, with adults, and it's going to get worse. Providing quality child care and early learning opportunities, investing in strong public schools, and expanding community-based social and recreational programs for families will go much farther in reducing crime than will an increased reliance on punishment. Simple community support programs such as home visits from nurses to low-income, first-time teen mothers in the US have led to reductions in crime rates in children of up to 80%. We should be looking at those things.

Investments in such programs take time to pay off, but as politicians we have a responsibility to act for the future rather than look for the quick and often simplistic and misguided fix.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate? Does another member wish to speak?

Ms. Matthews has moved third reading of Bill 103. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Third reading agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be named as in the motion.

#### EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS AMENDMENT ACT

(TEMPORARY HELP AGENCIES), 2009

#### LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES NORMES D'EMPLOI (AGENCES DE PLACEMENT TEMPORAIRE)

Mr. Fonseca moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 139, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 in relation to temporary help agencies and certain other matters / Projet de loi 139, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi en ce qui concerne les agences de placement temporaire et certaines autres questions.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Mr. Fonseca has moved second reading of Bill 139. Mr. Fonseca?

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, the member from Brampton West.

I'm proud to begin the second reading of Bill 139. This bill would amend the Employment Standards Act to enhance protection for employees working through temporary help agencies. I'm especially proud that this bill is before the House during one of the most chal-

lenging times in the economic downturn that we see right now in Ontario.

During such difficult times it's even more important to protect the most vulnerable members of our society. This legislation is an integral component of our poverty reduction strategy, led by my colleague the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Through the poverty reduction strategy, we're committed to reducing poverty and enhancing opportunities for all Ontarians.

Many Ontarians who work through temporary help agencies are vulnerable workers. They have little employment security and typically have low incomes compared to permanent workers. They look to the law to help protect them. It's important that when people are working they're treated with dignity and respect and have access to their employment standards rights.

The nature of work has changed. Today, temporary employees are an important part of Ontario's workforce. They actually make up about 11% of our workforce. More than 700,000 people in the province have temporary jobs, many through temporary help agencies. There are about 1,000 such agencies currently operating in Ontario. They provide their employees to client businesses that want staff on a non-permanent basis.

A few decades ago, temporary help agencies provided workers for short-term clerical jobs that lasted a few days or weeks. Agency workers were called in when regular staff members were away sick or on vacation. Today, agencies supply workers in a wide range of occupations: to industries such as manufacturing, construction, the service industry, and information technologies. An employee of an agency might be assigned to a single client business for several months or even years. They work side by side with permanent regular employees. However, their job security pales in comparison. They can be dismissed by the client at a moment's notice. In addition, they may have difficulty accessing their employment standards rights.

The nature of work may have changed, but our labour laws and regulations have sorely lagged behind. Our intent is to put in place legislation and make regulatory changes to reflect the real situations faced by temporary agency employees. We want to ensure that Ontario's employment legislation reflects the realities of today's labour market in a balanced way.

1640

I would like to point out that the vast majority of Ontario's temporary help agencies are decent employers. They treat their employees fairly. In fact, many of them have practices in place that recognize the needs of their employees. They do not take advantage of vulnerable workers. As a result, they have found themselves at a competitive disadvantage to those who break the law or mistreat their employees, those who engage in practices that do not serve the temporary employment market well.

Last May, we launched a comprehensive consultation on work through temporary help agencies. My parliamentary assistant, Vic Dhillon, and staff of the ministry met with 19 stakeholder organizations representing em-



ployee and employer interests. We also received an additional 130 written submissions from the public and other interested parties. Our consultation dealt with issues that had been brought to our attention by individuals and groups, as well as through employment standards inspections and investigations. We covered five main topics:

- the elect-to-work exemptions in the Employment Standards Act;

- barriers to permanent employment faced by temp agency employees;

- fees charged to workers by temp agencies;

- liability for Employment Standards Act violations; and

- information given to temp agency employees about their assignments.

Now I'd like to turn to the main elements in Bill 139 and the rationale behind those.

During our consultations, one of the main concerns raised was the barriers faced by temp agency employees in obtaining permanent employment. These barriers include restrictions on the permanent hiring of agency workers by client companies—so, a worker would be at that client company working for months or even years without the opportunity to be able to find permanent employment, even though they may be doing an exemplary job with that client company. They also include significant temporary-to-permanent fees charged to client businesses of agencies or the employees of agencies. As well, many pointed out that some agencies prohibited their client businesses from providing reference letters for agency employees, something that anybody would need to be able to find employment with a company—where they would want to check where they had worked and to get some references in terms of their skill set and what others have to say about them.

We know that many people working for these agencies want permanent work, and we want to help them get that permanent work. One of the main elements in our poverty reduction strategy is enhancing opportunities for all Ontarians. Enabling people to obtain permanent employment is one of the ways of achieving this goal. Obtaining sustainable permanent employment benefits not only those who are striving to better their lives, it benefits all of society. Our approach would remove some of the barriers that temp agency employees may face. It would allow them to seize opportunities if they should arise.

If Bill 139 passes, temporary help agencies would be prohibited from preventing a client from hiring an agency's assignment employee. They would also be prohibited from charging the client a temporary-to-permanent fee after six months or more have passed since the employee was first assigned to that client. So, once a temporary agency employee is assigned to a client, they could be assigned for one day and the clock starts ticking. After six months—they may have only worked there one day, or may have worked there through the whole six months—that client business would be able to hire them

permanently without a fee. As well, clients would no longer be restricted from providing references, as we just mentioned, to an assignment employee. So they'd be able to tell a future employer, where that temp agency employee may be looking for permanent employment, the skill set and knowledge an employee has and the type of attitude that employee has, and help them obtain that permanent employment.

Agencies would also be prohibited from restricting an assignment employee from taking permanent employment with a client of the agency, and they would be prohibited from charging the employee a fee if the employee should find permanent employment with a client. Temporary agencies will no longer be able to prevent their employees from obtaining permanent work. This is only fair.

Our legislation would also prevent agencies from charging other fees to employees. In some cases, these fees are mandatory if a person wants to be placed on assignments. We had heard that some agencies may be charging somebody, with just the hope of finding a job for that temporary agency employee. We didn't feel this was fair. Even when that employee did get an assignment, we heard that the fees they paid to that temporary agency employer may not have been made up by the type of employment they got through that temporary help agency.

Under our proposed legislation, agencies would be prohibited from charging a fee to a person for becoming an assignment employee. They would also be prohibited from charging their employee a fee for assistance in finding or attempting to find work with a client. Temporary agencies would also be prohibited from charging assignment employees or prospective employees a fee for assistance in preparing a resumé or preparing for job interviews.

Temp agency workers are some of the more vulnerable workers in Ontario. For an unemployed person, these fees can represent a lot of money. Many simply cannot afford to pay to get a job, yet in many cases they are forced to do so. How can we deny them an opportunity to improve themselves or even feed their families if we allow unscrupulous agencies to demand money for the promise of a job?

Agencies receive fees from clients, so there is no good reason for them to receive them from employees. Indeed, it can in some cases be seen as immoral for them to double-dip and also demand a fee from an employee. It's not right, and it's not fair. We want to put an end to this practice.

In our consultations, we heard that quite often employees do not even know the legal name of the temporary help agency where they are working. Our proposed legislation, if passed, would require agencies to provide employees, in writing, with the agency's name and contact information. Agencies would also be required to provide an information sheet on the employee's employment standards rights. The information sheet would be developed by my ministry.



Quite often, temporary agency employees are sent to assignments without knowing whom they will be working for and even where they will be working. This can leave them open to abuse and exploitation. Under Bill 139, temp agencies would be required to provide the employee, in writing, with the client's name and contact information when offering a work assignment. The information would also outline the wages, benefits, hours of work and pay schedule associated with the assignment. It would also provide a general description of the work to be performed for the client.

We heard from some temp agency employees who came in and shared their stories with us that they were hired to do one thing, but when they found themselves at a client's business, they were told to do something else. We felt this was unfair. People should know what work they will be doing and where. They should also have enough information to know if the job they're being sent to is something they want to do. Our proposed legislation would also strengthen the protection of employment standards rights for temporary agency employees.

A temporary help agency is generally considered to be the employer of a person it sends to work for a client business. The client business is not the employer. As the employer, the agency is responsible for making sure that a worker's employment standards rights are met. The law does not permit the agency to hide behind the curtain of "I didn't know."

1650

Our legislation would strengthen the protection provided by the Employment Standards Act. Bill 139 would prohibit the clients of agencies from engaging in reprisals against assignment employees for asserting their rights. The agency, as the employer, would continue to be prohibited from reprisals against its employees under the current provisions of the act.

In addition, we would be making it easier for temporary help agency employees to get wages owing to them if the agency fails to pay. If an agency owes an assignment employee wages and if a client owes the agency money, now the director of employment standards would be able to make a demand on the client. The demand would require the client to pay those monies to the director in trust, instead of paying the agency, for disbursement later to the employee. In the past, we have found it difficult to obtain monies owed, especially by fly-by-night agencies. This added enforcement power should make it easier for employees to receive wages owed.

Those are the main elements of our proposed legislation, legislation that would enhance employment standards protections for temporary help agency employees. We believe that our legislation would improve the overall well-being of the temporary help agency industry. It would benefit those agencies that have played by the rules and have treated their employees fairly, and we believe it would put an end to unscrupulous agencies that take advantage of and exploit vulnerable workers.

It is also important that when people are working, they are doing so in environments where employees are

treated with dignity and respect. By removing some barriers to permanent employment, we are opening doors to opportunity for many. Our strategy is about helping people achieve their potential. I'm proud of this legislation. I believe we have a fair and balanced proposal before the House, and I urge all members to support it.

In closing, I would like to thank all of the people who participated in our consultations and whose proposals formed the basis of this legislation. Thank you.

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** I rise in support of Bill 139, a bill that would enhance the Employment Standards Act protections for temporary help agency employees. I hope our government can count on member support, as it affects some of the most vulnerable in our society: women, immigrants and visible minorities.

Two years ago, I introduced a private member's bill on this issue. I am proud that our government has taken up the cause of these vulnerable workers. They are excessively represented in the lowest-paying and most insecure forms of work. I believe Bill 139 would help provide much-needed oversight in this industry.

Most often, vulnerable workers are not aware of where they can turn to make a complaint because they are so fearful of the repercussions if they do so. Over the past several years, I have received many complaints of fraudulent, fly-by-night employment agencies. I have heard of situations where employees are not paid for work, wages are below the legal minimum wage, there's no public holiday pay, no overtime pay and their health and safety are jeopardized. I heard endless horror stories that people had to tell as a result of questionable practices of these fly-by-night, fraudulent employment agencies.

As well, I heard many other comments on the need for changes in the industry when I chaired the Ministry of Labour's consultations last summer. There is no room in our society for abuse of people who simply are not able to exercise their rights. Bill 139 would go a long way to helping ensure that temp agency workers enjoy the same protections that other regular workers have. Bill 139 would put an end to the exorbitant fees charged to assignment employees, fees for spurious items such as resumé preparation, job interview skills and others. Bill 139 would put an end to prospective employees being charged a fee just to be able to work for the agency, or a fee for a job or assignment. Most of these individuals working for temp agencies are not rich. Many are struggling just to pay for their rent and put food on their families' tables. They can't afford to make the choice between food for a child or a job. This type of abuse must stop.

Bill 139 would also put an end to the sometimes impossible-to-overcome barriers placed in front of temp agency workers, barriers that prevent them from accessing permanent work with a client. Agencies would not be able to prevent a temp from taking a permanent job with a client. Agencies would not be able to charge temporary-to-permanent fees to a client after six months or more have passed since the employee was first assigned to the client. They would not be able to charge



the employee with a temporary-to-permanent fee, ever. Temp agency workers would now be given in writing the agency's name and contact information. They would also receive in writing full details of their assignment, including: the client's name and contact information; the wages, benefits, hours of pay and the pay schedule associated with the assignment; and a general description of the work to be performed for the client.

These are important changes to the Employment Standards Act. These change are one of the first steps in our government's poverty reduction strategy. These are changes that would help some of the most vulnerable workers in our province, workers with little employment security and low incomes. They, like everyone else in our province, deserve dignity and respect. I urge all members to support this important legislation and bring some order to this important sector.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments? There being none, further debate?

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** First I want to take the opportunity to congratulate the minister for bringing such important legislation to this place to be discussed and debated in order to protect the vulnerable people in our society. I know this issue has been around for many years. I know that the parliamentary assistant for the Minister of Labour was a great advocate on behalf of many workers in the province of Ontario, especially the people who worked through temp agencies. I know he brought it in a different format, as a private member's bill, many times to this House, and I'm glad to see our government, our Minister of Labour, adopting this issue and making it go the further steps to make it a law in the province of Ontario in order to protect thousands and thousands of people who want to work.

I was listening to the Minister of Labour speaking at the beginning, when he said that almost 700,000 across the province of Ontario are working through temp agencies. I think that's a huge number. I know the majority of those temp agencies are legitimate agencies. They want to work, they want to do good things for our economy, for the people around them, they want to help many workers to find jobs, and they also want to assist many different companies, factories and offices and many people looking for good, skilled workers, and to do the matching with different agencies. I think they do an excellent job.

I believe strongly that it's our obligation as a government to protect those people, to put the regulations and rules in place, to make sure everyone in the province of Ontario is treated fairly and is protected, because it's important for all of us to make sure that every person who wants to work has a right to work under certain conditions according to the laws and regulations of the province of Ontario. As we mentioned many times, especially the Minister of Labour, there was no rule to regulate those temp agencies in the province of Ontario. We know a lot of them open with goodwill and want to do good. But so many of them across the province of Ontario are what we call fly-by-night operations. They

open one week or two weeks, a month or a year and all of a sudden they close and they don't pay the people who work for them, and therefore, so many workers become victims of those organizations. I'm glad to see this being addressed, being looked after, by Bill 139, if this bill passes.

1700

It's important to have rules and regulations to protect the vulnerable people among us, especially in these days when jobs are so rare and so many people are losing their jobs; especially when our government, under the leadership of our Minister of Children and Youth Services, the Honourable Deb Matthews, is launching a poverty reduction strategy across Ontario.

I believe that when you have a permanent job, you assist the community, society and the families, and also help to reduce poverty in the province of Ontario.

In order to protect vulnerable people, we have to create the rules, and I believe now, if this bill passes, we'll have the rules to protect the workers.

I was shocked when I learned that many people, when they work for a temp agency, have no right to know their job descriptions; they are not allowed to know if they are getting a permanent job or not; and they are prohibited from finding a permanent job if they want to. I was shocked even more when I learned that some of the temp agencies used to charge the employees in order to find them a job and the clients in order to find them employees. If this bill is passed, it will put an end to these circumstances. It will have a fair strategy, a fair way to treat the workers in the province of Ontario.

I was also shocked when I learned that sometimes a person who is looking for a job because they need it badly—they want to put food on the table for themselves and for their families—has no chance to say no. They go for whatever job the agency finds them. Sometimes they don't even ask about the circumstances or what kind of a job it is; they don't ask about how long they will have the job and who they are going to work for. It's sad, especially in the province of Ontario, where we believe strongly in people's right to know the conditions of their work and the conditions of their employer.

If this bill passes, it will create the conditions which will obligate the temp agency to send all the information to the workers and give them all the descriptions about the nature of the job they are going to do. It will also prohibit the agency from charging the workers a fee. Also, more interestingly, if this bill is passed, the workers will have a right to obtain a full-time job if the client finds them well-skilled and able to do the job for them. So I think it's right.

Also, if this bill passes, it will protect the workers from working in an environment that does not suit them and doesn't give them the chance to express their opinions. I think it's very important for all the people who want to work, to find a place to work and provide support for themselves and their families.

Many people, especially newcomers to this land, have no ability to know or navigate the system and they don't



know the nature of their rights. They also have no idea about the different jobs and different kinds of jobs around them, so they fall in this trap with no way to express themselves or to defend themselves because, as I mentioned, they don't know the rights that exist in the province of Ontario. So, if this bill passes, it will give them the rights, the tools and the mechanisms to give them the protection they're looking for.

I want to congratulate, again, the minister for working hard for the people of Ontario, and also the parliamentary assistant who, as I mentioned at the beginning, brought this issue to our attention many different times. He wanted to pass a private member's bill because he was shocked when he learned that, in the province of Ontario, for so many people, they have no conditions; they just want to work. Some of those temp agencies take advantage of these people. Also, those fly-by-night organizations with temp agencies, sometimes the contract, at the present time, is made between the temp agencies and the workers and they have no idea who they are working for. So therefore, the people are working for the temp agency and the temp agency is the employer. Sometimes those temp agencies close and they don't pay the workers. Therefore, they lose the work and also their ability to provide support for their families.

In this bill, the government is obligated to make sure that the temp agency is paying the workers the money they owe them. Also, if they don't pay them, they go back to the clients who hired those temp agencies to make sure they pay the workers who worked at their companies. Overall, I think this bill, if passed, will create a safety mechanism for the people of Ontario, especially the vulnerable people who want to work.

As I mentioned, especially in these days, those temp agencies have become so big and so huge everywhere in the province of Ontario, and sometimes they employ people for a month or two, sometimes for years. I think our obligation as a government is to put the tools and mechanisms in place in order to create protection for the vulnerable people who want to work.

I think if this bill passes it will make sure that people who want to work for a temp agency will be protected and there will be rules applied. They have a right to know where they work and how many hours and the condition of the work, and if they have any complaints, if they feel or they think that the workplace is not fit or not safe, they can complain at the job and they will be protected, not abused.

All these elements will be enshrined in the bill. I think this is a good step forward in order to protect the vulnerable people in the province of Ontario, to protect the workers, because I think we owe them respect. We want to create good conditions for them to work with respect and dignity, because they come with the full intention to work. I think our obligation as a government, as the people who are in charge, is to make sure all the people get the right not to be abused. If this bill passes, it will create a great step toward a brighter future for many people who work in the province of Ontario and also give

the legitimate temp agencies that work according to rules and laws an advantage and give them the ability to continue to do good things for all the people, especially for the workers. Also, as I mentioned, temp agencies that are fly-by-night organizations will have no room and no time in the province of Ontario.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you very much for allowing me to speak and I want to congratulate the minister and his parliamentary assistant for bringing such important legislation to this place in order to regulate temp agencies and create a good environment for workers in the province of Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It's a pleasure to rise and speak to Bill 139. I think it's certainly an example of fairness, something that we really wanted to see move ahead in this province. My congratulations go out to the minister and to the member for Brampton West for bringing this initiative forward. I think it's been very clearly stated in the minister's remarks and in the remarks that came forward from the parliamentary assistant and the previous speaker that this bill is intended to help those who are often noted as the most vulnerable in our society and those people who often are taken advantage of. Sometimes they don't understand what the rules are in a new country, perhaps; sometimes they don't understand what rights they have; sometimes things are being done to them that are illegal and they don't realize that they are illegal.

Bill 139, if passed, will make it clear to all Ontarians what the rules are surrounding the issue of temporary help. If you put yourself in a position where you become an employee in a temporary situation or you're in a position where you're actually the agency or the company that is using temporary help, the rules will be very clear. I think we would all agree in this House that they're rules that are very reasonable and rules that we ourselves would like to know we could avail ourselves of if we were to find ourselves in that situation, working temporary.

Some people work temporary as a choice; other people work because they have to. But certainly I think it's something we've seen in our society in the employment sector, that people are exercising a number of choices in their employment options. If this is something that is going to continue off into the future, I think any responsible level of government needs to implement policies that are going to allow those in our society who, as I said, are the most vulnerable, to be protected.

1710

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I listened attentively to the minister's remarks and the parliamentary assistant's remarks on Bill 139, and I'm confident that this bill will go to committee.

What I really think is important here is not to lose sight that everyone in this Legislature, I would think—



certainly on this side—would like everyone to have a job and the security of a job and the security of income. So I don't want to be portrayed as someone who is against the provision of job security. What I am saying, though, is that the status of the economy of Ontario today is such that there are no jobs. Two hundred and seventy-five thousand individuals and their families are without work. The economy is heading south at astronomical speed, and we're talking here about a bill protecting employment. We should have more employment agencies, not fewer. McGuinty is not trying to find jobs for people; he's closing them down. He's got more inspectors and things that are actually red tape in the economy. So Bill 139—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The member for Eglinton—Lawrence on a point of order.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** The rules of this House are quite clear: You're supposed to speak to the bill before us, which he is not. Secondly, the veteran member knows full well that if you refer to another member, you're to refer to him or her by riding or by ministry—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. I'll address each of those.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Order. One is that in questions and comments you're not necessarily to speak to the bill, but you are to speak to the comments of the person whose address you're questioning and commenting on. Secondly, it's not uncommon in our Legislature for the government or the Premier to be referred to by his last name; many members refer to the McGuinty government and such. Thank you for your point of order.

Questions and comments?

**Mr. Mike Colle:** The member from London—Fanshawe made some very relevant points about the fact that we need to protect vulnerable workers who have been in a position where they can't find full-time work and go to these temporary agencies. Until this bill, there wasn't the protection to ensure there would be fair working conditions and fair treatment of these workers.

In the long run, if you treat workers fairly, the operators of these temporary agencies would also prosper in their attempts to provide employment. That's what has been missing, and many vulnerable workers in communities across Ontario have been asking for this type of protection from unscrupulous temporary agencies—we all know of them. That's what this bill tries to address in a meaningful way. The Minister of Labour and his able assistant, Mr. Dhillon, the member from Brampton West, should be congratulated for having the interest in putting this forward. They have brought this forward for that reason, and I applaud them for doing that.

We all know that the economy is fragile in these times. Like someone said, this is not an economic storm; this is economic climate change we're seeing. We're trying to do the best we can to deal with it with measures like this. Like someone said, this recession really is international—global—and we are trying to deal with it in a meaningful way. It doesn't do any good for the

member from Durham to sit here and talk down the Ontario worker—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Member for Eglinton—Lawrence, I just finished reminding members that you're to speak to the remarks, in this case, by the minister and the member for Brampton West. I'd appreciate it if you would do that.

Questions and comments?

If there are no further questions and comments—the minister isn't here. Oh, no, I'm sorry. I was a little behind. Even I lost track a little bit here.

The member for London—Fanshawe, you have two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know so many people from both sides of the House are trying to confuse you. Anyway, you do an excellent job.

I want to thank the members from Oakville, Durham and Eglinton—Lawrence for commenting on my speech.

I want to tell the member from Durham that the intent of this bill is not to penalize the temp agencies; as a matter of fact, it's to regulate this industry. So many temp agencies in the province of Ontario do an excellent job.

The minister mentioned in his speech that temp agencies do an excellent job for our economy. They try to find a match between the workers and the companies that are looking for special kinds of skills. I think they do a good job. He mentioned, too, that some temp agencies are good and that they want to expand their business and do an excellent job. We have to protect them too, because so many fly-by-night temp agencies open and then ruin the reputation of the good temp agencies.

If this bill is passed, it will protect everyone. It will protect the workers and make sure they are working in a good environment. It will also create good conditions for the good agencies to maintain their image and give them a chance to support many workers across the province of Ontario in finding good jobs.

It's very important, because at the present time almost 700,000 workers in the province of Ontario get their jobs through temp agencies. It's a huge number. It's our obligation and duty, as elected officials, to create rules to make sure that everyone working through those temp agencies is protected in such a way as to respect their dignity, time, effort and skills, and also to make sure they get paid. As I mentioned, so many people work through illegitimate temp agencies and lose their payments.

Therefore this bill, if passed, will protect everyone.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It's a pleasure to join the debate once again on Bill 139. Once again, it gives me the opportunity to extend my congratulations to the people who have worked hard to bring this bill to this stage.

I'm hoping, from what appears to be the compliance from the other side of the House, that this proposed bill would move forward to hearings at committee shortly and we can hear from the people of Ontario again.



From what I've heard from my constituents and from those who have visited my office and those who have brought this issue up over the years, there is a section of the population out there that is not receiving the protection it should under the current legislation. That's legislation that I think all parties in this House have had their hands on at some point in time. A hallmark of a good government is that you're able to improve legislation, you're able to move existing legislation, or amend existing legislation, to make the working conditions of people in Ontario a little bit better than those of the generation before. We're able to do that, because what this bill essentially does is strengthen the protections that Ontario workers currently have under the Employment Standards Act. As I said, all three parties in the House today have had their shot at the Employment Standards Act over the years and have made changes that they thought would be in the best interests of workers. This bill, I think, follows that concept.

This proposed bill, if passed, would allow the people who are currently bringing forward their concerns about the working conditions they find themselves in—they find themselves in situations that, simply, all Ontarians should find untenable. Sometimes they find themselves in situations that we wouldn't like to see our own sons or daughters in, that we wouldn't like to be in ourselves. As legislators, I don't think that we can sit back and allow that situation to continue.

By bringing Bill 139 forward, the minister and the parliamentary assistant speak very highly to the impact of the bill and make us understand that if this bill is passed, some people in Ontario are going to have a much better life than they currently have. That's something we should all aspire to in this House, and I think we should look at the bill in that vein.

1720

Often, a person who works for a temporary employment agency doesn't really understand who their actual employer is. Some people think it's the client business they work for; other people think it's the temporary agency. What should be made clear today, I think, and is made clear by this bill, is that the client business is not the employer of the temporary person who is working there. The temporary employee actually works for the temporary agency. Therefore, all the protections under the legislation that are being proposed today will flow through that agency, and that agency will be required to provide the protections that are being proposed today.

If you look at the work experience, if you look at the history of Canada, if you look at the immigrant experience of this country, it's not unusual for people to come to this country to get a new start. It's not unusual for people to choose Canada out of many other countries in the world they could have chosen as a place where they think they're going to get more opportunities than they had in their previous country. Often, they've got a job when they land here. But quite often, part of that immigration experience is finding a job once you get here. Quite often, people come over, they've been sponsored

by friends or by family, and their first priority is to make sure that they can support themselves and their family. The first thing that they want to do is to start earning their own income. I think there's a sense that they want to prove to their new countrypeople that they're capable of providing for themselves and that they're the sort of person whom we would like to see in our country and who is going to contribute to our country.

Quite often, that employment experience doesn't start with a permanent job. Quite often, it might start with a part-time job. Quite often, it may start with volunteer work. Quite often, it may start with learning English as a second language, or maybe skills training. All sorts of ingredients, I think, are part of that mix that allows people to become new Canadians. But often enough, I think, to be significant, it's important to note that that experience also involves a temporary job. People who move to this country from other countries should expect that what they're going to find in this new land of opportunity is a country where we value each other. The employment relationships that we enter into with each other are ones that I think will typify what is the hallmark of our country, and that is that we treat each other fairly and with respect. That's exactly what this bill does today. I think it says that we understand that there is a significant portion now of the population that, either by choice or out of necessity, has decided that it wants to perform its work on a temporary or a part-time basis, and often they will go through an agency to do that.

The rules in some cases in the past, I think, were unclear. People didn't understand the rights that they already had. That gave rise to people bringing their concerns forward to the Minister of Labour and to individual MPPs' offices, asking that something be done. Often, that was a matter of enforcing existing rules. There were people out there—a few bad apples—who were simply breaking the existing rules. But it also gave this government the opportunity to take a look at the existing rules and see if perhaps it wasn't time for us to move forward as a society here in Ontario, if it wasn't time to strengthen the employment protections that we should all enjoy in this province, and it was decided that it was.

The first initiative brought forward by the member from Brampton West really laid the issue on the table and got us all thinking about it. To their credit, the Ministry of Labour, the Premier, the government and the cabinet decided that this was an initiative that was worth taking forward, that the work that had been done by the member from Brampton West had set the stage for a much larger piece of legislation that was going to provide even more protections.

That's what we have before us today in Bill 139. We have an opportunity, I think, before us that's going to allow us to make Ontario the place that people really, truly want to call home, where we know that we have the protections that we would want for ourselves and for our families as well and that we extend to all people in Ontario by passing a bill like Bill 139.

I'm going to ask that all members of the House support this bill and allow it to move forward. If there are



any concerns, if there are any amendments to be made, if there's anything that needs to be strengthened, anything that needs to be changed, I think, in the past, this government has demonstrated that it's open to those sorts of changes if they're presented in a reasonable manner and a logical case is made for them. So I'm asking for all members of the House to support this. By doing this, you're going to make the lives of some people who work currently for temporary agencies a whole lot better.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I listened carefully to the member for Oakville and I pretty much agree with most things he said on the bill. Our position on this would likely include protection for workers.

I tried to make the point earlier, before I was interrupted, in the context of the economy today and this bill. The member for Eglinton-Lawrence was probably right to take a point of order, but I think it's fair that I'm allowed to make a point on the economy.

In this time of the economy, they should be working with employee groups as well as employer groups. The Employment Standards Act, the long-standing piece of legislation which this amends, is a bill that we could all take a share in because it was amended in almost every Legislature.

I heard in recent times that one of the provisions in this is the issue of severance pay and the qualification period. In here, I think three months is the number I heard. Those things need to be discussed because right now, in these troubled economic times, I'm looking at and hearing from companies where there's no severance pay. These are full-time jobs; 275,000 jobs have been lost in the economy. We're amending the wrong act here. We should be looking at protecting pension provisions for employees whose pensions could be dissolved because of lack of funding in these tough economic times.

I know there are portions of the bill—having spent about 10 years in personnel myself, I'm very familiar with many provisions under the Employment Standards Act. The temporary agency thing is often—one case you might be interested in is nursing, for instance. Often, nurses have employment agencies because they work in an environment where there often could be sickness. I want to understand: Are these agencies exempt from these provisions? It's my understanding that to some extent they are.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** There's much more to be said on this bill.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I have the pleasure and privilege of sitting beside the member for Brampton West. He's been my seatmate now for the past two Parliaments; indeed, he is my neighbour just to the north of the great riding of Mississauga-Streetsville.

I know how hard the member worked on this particular bill. In particular, the member had a lot of rep-

resentation from within the South Asian communities, among people who found that, lacking language skills, lacking some experience in Canada, they were the ones being taken advantage of—dare I say the words “ripped off”—by some of the more unscrupulous operators.

This particular member brought this concern to this Legislature, talked about it in caucus, brought it up as a private member's bill, and now it's going to be the law of the land for such simple things as preventing reprisals when an employee complains about something that's not right, so that the employee can't be blacklisted. The member for Brampton West deserves a lot of credit for this and he should feel very, very proud of it. A lot of the people whose lives are going to be made a great deal easier, who will be treated more fairly, more humanely, will owe a lot of that treatment to the member for Brampton West.

Among the other things this member can take some credit for is outlawing the practice of charging a fee to a person who becomes an assignment employee. That's wrong; that's double-dipping. That's gone now.

Another thing he cleaned up was the charging of fees for finding assistance—that's wrong; that's double-dipping and that's been cleaned up now; or charging employees or prospective employees a fee to help them prepare a resumé or prepare for a job. That's wrong, and that's been cleaned up now.

The member for Brampton West has done an outstanding job in his contributions to this bill, and I think he deserves credit for it.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Mike Colle:** In response to the points made by the member for Oakville: As he said, this is about ensuring that vulnerable workers are not taken advantage of.

One of the things temporary employers have sometimes been doing is charging these vulnerable workers a fee to work. If you paid the fee, you would get the job; if you didn't pay the fee—these were sort of like kickbacks in many ways. It was an unfortunate practice that this legislation will prohibit, so that the temporary worker who is desperate to make those dollars will not be subject to these under-the-table arrangements. Also, there was no protection against reprisals or forcing people to work when they weren't well or to work extra hours. I think it's sometimes the hidden workforce in Ontario. If you were to take a bus tour to Brampton, you would see the new face of Canada, the new face of Ontario. You'll see that people from 120 countries of the world live in Brampton. They work very hard. They raise their families. They've come to Canada with very little and they've made Brampton—I remember when Bill Davis was Premier, I think it was about 70,000 people. I think the member from Brampton West will tell us there are—what?—over 300,000?

**Interjection:** Five hundred.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Up to 500,000 people. The member from Durham, being in the far east of the GTA, probably

never travels to Brampton. But if he were to go to Brampton—it's one of Canada's largest cities, and it's been built by many of these hard-working newcomers who get their start with these temporary jobs and then work their way up, through their blood, sweat and tears. What this bill is doing is ensuring that their voices are heard. The member from Brampton West, the honourable Victor Dhillon, has heard them and has put this forward and it's now hopefully going to pass.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments? The member for Oakville, you have two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I'd like to take those two minutes to start by thanking the member from Durham for his illuminating comments, the member from Mississauga–Streetsville and the member from Eglinton–Lawrence, who all spoke eloquently about the bill and I think really hit the nail on the head as to why we should pass it and why we should move it ahead. It's simply a bill whose time has come.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank the temporary agency business, to thank those people who are in the business, and actually—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** Yes, there are some great businesses out there. As is often the case, the initiative behind this is to solve the problems of a few of the bad apples out there. I don't want anybody thinking that anyone in this chamber has it in for the temporary agency profession. I think it's an honourable profession that often provides us with professionals—nurses, office staff, anybody from engineers to surveyors—a variety of things. The list goes on and on. As I said earlier in my comments, many people in a lot of professions now are deciding that full-time permanent work isn't the way for them and that they would much prefer temporary work or

a less permanent set-up, and they should be entitled to the same employment rights as anybody else around here, anybody else in this room. I think we all enjoy employment rights ourselves, and we would want to see them extended to everybody in the province of Ontario.

During consultations, one of the main concerns that were raised was the barriers that are faced by temporary agency employees in obtaining permanent employment. I think that in economic times such as we're in, in the situation that we find ourselves in as part of the global recession, and also dealing with a poverty reduction strategy, we want to bring them together, and we need to enhance every single opportunity we can find for Ontarians. Often, that enhancement means finding a full-time job. This knocks down a lot of barriers and will allow that to happen for Canadians who are seeking full-time work.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate? Does any other member wish to speak? The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and deputy government House leader.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I move adjournment of the debate.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading debate adjourned.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Orders of the day?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I move adjournment of the House.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House is adjourned until Thursday, February 19, at 9 of the clock.

*The House adjourned at 1734.*



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

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Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

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Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)</b>	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
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Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
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<b>Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
<b>Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
<b>Carroll, Hon. / L'hon. M. Aileen (LIB)</b>	Barrie	Minister of Culture / Ministre de la Culture
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
<b>Crozier, Bruce (LIB)</b>	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)</b>	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	Windsor–Tecumseh	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
		Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
<b>Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)</b>	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
<b>Horwath, Andrea (NDP)</b>	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
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Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
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Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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Qadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
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Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	
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Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
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Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton—Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga—Erindale	Minister of Small Business and Consumer Services / Ministre des Petites Entreprises et des Services aux consommateurs
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	
<b>Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Perth—Wellington	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
<b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>	Simcoe—Grey	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
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Khalil Ramal, Peter Shurman  
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Howard Hampton, Greg Sorbara  
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Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day





<b>Waste disposal</b>	
Mr. John Yakabuski .....	4865
<b>Child protection</b>	
Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....	4865
<b>Automotive research and innovation</b>	
Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis .....	4866
<b>Health care</b>	
Mr. John O'Toole .....	4866
<b>Sir Winston Churchill Collegiate and Vocational Institute</b>	
Mr. Bill Mauro .....	4866
<b>Rural Connections broadband program</b>	
Mr. Jeff Leal .....	4867
<b>Legislative interns</b>	
Mr. Dave Levac .....	4867

#### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES / RAPPORTS DES COMITÉS

<b>Standing Committee on Public Accounts</b>	
Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette .....	4867
Debate adjourned .....	4867
<b>Standing Committee on Public Accounts</b>	
Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette .....	4867
Debate adjourned .....	4868

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI

<b>Truth About Caledonia Act, 2009, Bill 146, Mr. Barrett / Loi de 2009 concernant la vérité sur Caledonia, projet de loi 146, M. Barrett</b>	
First reading agreed to .....	4868
Mr. Toby Barrett .....	4868
<b>Holodomor Memorial Day Act, 2009, Bill 147, Mr. Levac, Ms. DiNovo, Mr. Klees / Loi de 2009 sur le Jour commémoratif de l'Holodomor, projet de loi 147, M. Levac, Mme DiNovo, M. Klees</b>	
First reading agreed to .....	4868
Mr. Dave Levac .....	4868

#### PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

<b>Assistance to farmers</b>	
Mr. Ernie Hardeman .....	4868
<b>Protection for miners</b>	
Mme France Gélinas .....	4869

<b>Pope John Paul II</b>	
Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti .....	4869
<b>Child care</b>	
Mr. John O'Toole .....	4869
<b>Hospices</b>	
Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis .....	4869
<b>Assistance to farmers</b>	
Mr. Toby Barrett .....	4870
<b>Firearms control</b>	
Mr. Mike Colle .....	4870
<b>Motorcycle safety</b>	
Mr. Ernie Hardeman .....	4870
<b>Bathurst Heights Adult Learning Centre</b>	
Mr. Mike Colle .....	4870
<b>Sales tax</b>	
Mr. John O'Toole .....	4870
<b>Sales tax</b>	
Mr. Toby Barrett .....	4871
<b>Child care</b>	
Mr. John O'Toole .....	4871

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

<b>Child and Family Services Statute Law Amendment Act, 2009, Bill 103, Ms. Matthews / Loi de 2009 modifiant des lois en ce qui concerne les services à l'enfance et à la famille, projet de loi 103, Mme Matthews</b>	
Mr. Paul Miller .....	4871
Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti .....	4874
Mrs. Christine Elliott .....	4874
Mr. Rosario Marchese .....	4874
Mrs. Maria Van Bommel .....	4875
Mr. Paul Miller .....	4875
Mr. Rosario Marchese .....	4875
Mr. Mike Colle .....	4878
Mr. John O'Toole .....	4878
Mr. Paul Miller .....	4879
Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti .....	4879
Mr. Rosario Marchese .....	4879
Third reading agreed to .....	4880
<b>Employment Standards Amendment Act (Temporary Help Agencies), 2009, Bill 139, Mr. Fonseca / Loi de 2009 modifiant la Loi sur les normes d'emploi (agences de placement temporaire), projet de loi 139, M. Fonseca</b>	
Hon. Peter Fonseca .....	4880
Mr. Vic Dhillon .....	4882
Mr. Khalil Ramal .....	4883
Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn .....	4884
Mr. John O'Toole .....	4884



Mr. Mike Colle .....	4885
Mr. Khalil Ramal.....	4885
Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn.....	4885
Mr. John O'Toole .....	4887
Mr. Bob Delaney .....	4887
Mr. Mike Colle .....	4887
Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn.....	4888
Second reading debate adjourned .....	4888

# CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Wednesday 18 February 2009 / Mercredi 18 février 2009

## ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

<b>Regulated Health Professions Amendment Act, 2009, Bill 141, Mr. Caplan / Loi de 2009 modifiant la Loi sur les professions de la santé réglementées, projet de loi 141, M. Caplan</b>	
Mme France Gélinas .....	4847
Ms. Helena Jaczek.....	4849
Mr. John O'Toole.....	4849
M. Gilles Bisson.....	4850
Mme France Gélinas .....	4850
Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer.....	4850
Mr. Gilles Bisson .....	4852
Mr. Mike Colle.....	4852
Mr. Ted Arnott.....	4852
Hon. David Caplan.....	4853
Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer.....	4853
Second reading agreed to .....	4854

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Tony Ruprecht.....	4854
The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters).....	4854

## Legislative pages

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters).....	4854
--------------------------------------	------

## Use of question period

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters).....	4854
--------------------------------------	------

## ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

### Ontario budget

Mr. Robert W. Runciman.....	4854
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	4855

### Ontario economy

Mr. Robert W. Runciman.....	4855
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	4855

### Manufacturing jobs

Mr. Gilles Bisson .....	4856
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	4856

### Manufacturing and forestry sector jobs

Mr. Gilles Bisson .....	4857
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	4857
Hon. George Smitherman.....	4857
Hon. Michael Gravelle.....	4858

### Ontario budget

Mr. Tim Hudak.....	4858
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	4858

### Ontario economy

Mr. Paul Miller.....	4859
Hon. Michael Bryant .....	4859

### Health care

Mrs. Carol Mitchell.....	4859
Hon. David Caplan.....	4859

### Ministry of the Attorney General

Mr. Frank Klees .....	4860
Hon. Christopher Bentley.....	4860

### Special care homes

Mme France Gélinas .....	4860
Hon. David Caplan.....	4861

### Poverty

Mr. Yasir Naqvi .....	4861
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	4861

### Tobacco industry

Mr. Toby Barrett .....	4862
Hon. Leona Dombrowsky .....	4862

### Consumer protection

Ms. Cheri DiNovo.....	4862
Hon. Harinder S. Takhar .....	4862

### Municipalities

Mr. Bas Balkissoon .....	4863
Hon. Jim Watson.....	4863

### Children's mental health services

Mrs. Julia Munro .....	4863
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	4863

### Health care

Mme France Gélinas .....	4864
Hon. David Caplan.....	4864

### Correction of record

Hon. Michael Bryant.....	4864
Mr. Paul Miller.....	4864

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

### School playground

Mr. Ted Arnott .....	4865
----------------------	------

### Eden Mills ski club

Mrs. Liz Sandals.....	4865
-----------------------	------

*Continued on inside back cover*



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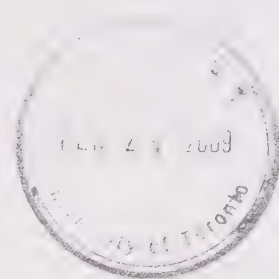
First Session, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 39<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)



Thursday 19 February 2009

Jeudi 19 février 2009

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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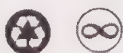
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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 19 February 2009

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 19 février 2009

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by an Islamic prayer.

*Prayers.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

FAMILY STATUTE LAW  
AMENDMENT ACT, 2009

LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT DES LOIS  
EN CE QUI CONCERNE  
LE DROIT DE LA FAMILLE

Mr. Bentley moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 133, An Act to amend various Acts in relation to certain family law matters and to repeal the Domestic Violence Protection Act, 2000 / Projet de loi 133, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne des questions de droit de la famille et abrogeant la Loi de 2000 sur la protection contre la violence familiale.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** It is a great privilege to be able to stand and address the members of this House, and those who will be watching, on this very important issue. The legislation we bring before the House today is legislation that all members of the House are not only interested in but have been calling for in various forms for some period of time.

I want to say at the outset, as I said when we announced and introduced this on November 24 last year, that the provisions in this bill are very much the product of comments and active lobbying of members of this House of all parties. They strike and they touch the very heart of our society: the family. They affect the soul of our society: our children. We are always working to make sure that what we can do as a Legislature will support that heart and that soul.

When families break up, when families are under severe stress, it can wrench not only those involved but affect the fabric of society. What we need and what we are addressing through this legislation are the tools to assist children who might be at risk, to assist partners in a relationship who might be under threat, to assist where the family is breaking up and to assist the fair resolution of the issues so that all parties can get on with their lives.

So we've introduced this piece of legislation that touches, as I say, a number of very important issues, and

I, in these remarks, would like to address a number of those areas. It will be, if passed by this House, the most significant reform to the relevant legislation in several decades.

I want to let members of the House know that as they were actively lobbying and actively speaking about a number of the issues that have found their way into this bill, I was travelling the province and speaking to members of the judiciary, members of the bar and members of the public about our justice system generally, about our determination to make our system of justice faster, more accessible and more effective for the people we serve. And the people we serve are the people of Ontario.

We are looking and actively working to make sure our criminal justice system meets those needs, that our civil justice system meets those needs and that our family justice system meets those needs, because as I was travelling the province and speaking to, as I say, members of the judiciary, lawyers and members of the public about criminal justice or civil justice, they all wanted to return to a discussion about family law. And they had several key concerns: First, that issues that have been debated in this Legislature for a decade had still not been ultimately resolved. Key among those was the safety of partners in a relationship who were under threat from the other partner.

They had concerns about legislation that hadn't been looked at or amended in almost two decades and which, in its form, was actually causing extended stays in the courts when we should be getting to the decision points in legislation faster.

They had concerns about the family law process itself, which has been slowing down, getting increasingly costly and in some cases has in fact been making difficult times for families even more trying.

I say, on the latter score, that this piece of legislation will touch on a few of those issues, but we are now actively working as a government, and will be working with the parties opposite, on procedural and process reforms to streamline the approach to family law and make it faster and more accessible for all Ontarians.

But to the first two issues this legislation touches: One issue that has been before this Legislature for many years because of the concern of all of us that a partner in a relationship should not be under threat or fear from the other for any reason had still not been resolved.

We have within our Criminal Code certain protections that one who is being threatened by another can seek. Under section 810 of the Criminal Code, you can seek

what is commonly known as a peace bond. The challenge is that the procedure can be long—the charter affords numerous protections—so you might not get the immediate protection you need.

Under the Family Law Act, section 46, there is the ability to provide by a judge an order restraining the threatening party from going after the fearful party. But once that order has been issued, it's not necessarily enforced as vigorously as it needs to be throughout the province, and even when it is enforced, the enforcement measures are not always up to the job.

So members of this Legislature, family law advocates and advocates of victims of violence have been calling for reform. They've been calling for reform for a decade. Indeed, we seem to be united in our need for reform, but we have not been able to come up with a means of reform that everybody can agree with. So we consulted extensively over the past year and have now introduced what is found in this legislation, and that will be the following.

0910

Judges will continue to have the ability to control the process in their courts as they have historically had, and as has been assisted by legislation, to control the conduct of the parties. But in addition to that power, there will be the ability of a judge in a family law dispute to issue a restraining order against a party that is threatening or engaging in other conduct that makes one of the parties, usually a woman, fearful for her health, safety or the safety of her children. That additional power in the court to issue that order will include the ability to issue it on terms, so that the party that has been engaging in threatening conduct or other unacceptable conduct will have to follow certain terms. You say, "Well, what if the party under the order breaches it? In the current state of the legislation there is an enforcement power but it's not always up to the job." Under the legislation before this House, if that order of a judge is breached then the order can be enforced under the Criminal Code as a breach of a court order. It's subject to the arrest and bail protections that exist in the Criminal Code; it's subject to the full force of the criminal law.

We take the safety of all Ontarians very seriously. Members of the House have been calling for improvement in this area for more than a decade, as reflected in legislation that was unanimously passed by this House. The provision in this bill is addressing this House's concern for those who have been the subject of threats or might be in the future. It is essential that we provide the protection that people need when they need it.

There is an additional aspect to this: Because some of the most dangerous threats can arise quickly, because emotions in family proceedings can sometimes be so high that they have the potential to boil over, it is important that the protection that a judge can afford in these circumstances be available quickly. There is in the legislation the ability to issue that protection quickly—very quickly. So the protection can be in existence, the order can have effect, the order can be enforced and the party

fearful or under threat can receive what they need. Of course, full due process of the law will enable the other party who is the subject of the order to challenge it in the usual way, but only after the protection has been issued to the fearful partner. This part of the legislation will address what all members of this House have addressed in many different ways for more than a decade.

There is another provision of this bill which addresses the safety of our children. We are all painfully aware of the tragic death of Katelynn Sampson. Whenever there's a tragic death, we ask ourselves, "What more can we do, what more must we do to ensure the safety of our children?"—in this context, the safety of our children who might be the subject of an application to change the legal custody from one person to another. Of course, custody is exchanged on a daily basis in an informal sense. You give somebody your children to look after for the afternoon and they have responsibility. But what we're talking about in this legislation is legal custody: getting the force of the law, the stamp of approval from the courts for the legal exchange of custody from one person to another.

The minimum requirements that exist at the moment for information to be placed before a judge are very low. The judges, of course, can inquire, and the parties can provide additional information. But the absolute requirements for background information before the application can be heard—potentially important information that relates to childhood safety—are really very minimal.

So what we're doing in this legislation is taking a different approach that begins with the safety of the child, one that says that if you want custody of a child and you want that custody application to be approved by courts, then you must provide additional information to ensure the future safety of the child. That information, for those who are not parents of the child, includes the following.

First, a background records check—the type of criminal background check you have to apply for if you want to be a playground supervisor, for example. That information must be obtained by the one seeking custody and placed before the court.

Second is a history of any proceedings that the applicant has had before the courts. We have within our courts information about different proceedings: maybe prior applications for custody, maybe other issues that might affect a court's determination about the safety of the child in that person's custody. All of that information will be made available to the judge who will be determining whether somebody seeking legal custody should be given it.

Third, of course, is information about the plan that the person seeking custody has for the child. What's the child's future to be in that person's custody? We need that information.

Fourth, has the person seeking custody had a history with the children's aid societies? The children's aid society has a statutory requirement to look after the interests of children. They have offices throughout the province



and resources to do that, and they involve themselves in protection proceedings that relate to children to make sure that the children are protected.

If the applicant for custody has a history with or a history that's known to a children's aid society, we want that information to be before the court. We want the judge to know before the judge passes judgment, not after. The judge can still make the decision required by law, the decision that is in the best interests of the child, but we want to make sure that before the decision is made, the judge has all the information he or she needs to make the decision—all of it. That's why we've placed these additional requirements in the legislation.

There are some other aspects of this bill that deal with how we can help resolve family disputes quickly. Of course, our interest is, first, to assist the families in overcoming the stress or the strain, to assist the families in dealing with the stress or the strain, to assist the families in staying together. But where it is clear that that's not possible, where the circumstances dictate that that is not to happen, where there are issues of safety, we want to make sure, from the perspective of the law, that the law does not in fact extend the period of time over which families are attempting to resolve their issues but helps to shorten it. So there are several things we have done within this piece of legislation.

One relates to the division of pensions. Now, pension law is an enormously complicated area of the law, and trying to ascertain the value of an asset such as a pension so that it can be properly divided in family proceedings has proven very, very challenging. It has been the subject of great comment by all those involved and great expenditure in terms of lawyers and experts by all those who have a pension to be divided.

0920

The bar—lawyers involved on both sides of the dispute—has been calling for years for us to step in as a government and simplify the rules; make one rule so that everybody knows what it is. It means that the pension valuation can be conducted much quicker; it means the decision can be reached much faster. And since the pension is often the most valuable asset a couple is likely to have, the family issues can then be resolved much faster.

The law commission that was set up by my predecessor, Michael Bryant—it had been eliminated some years before—has been doing some really good work. One of the things they took a look at was division of the pension asset, and they came up with a recommendation. We took a look at the recommendation and we took the heart of that recommendation and, working with the Ministry of Finance and with the pension law community—because we don't want to do anything that is going to upset those who administer the pensions—we are proposing within this legislation an approach to the division of pension assets that is clear, that will be consistent and that will be much simpler than the existing. No longer will both sides to the dispute have to retain experts to battle it out in an extended fight over the division of pen-

sion assets. This will be much faster and, for the parties involved, much cheaper, meaning there are more assets to be left for the family and for the children.

There's another area we have addressed within the legislation—it's the last one I'll touch on—and that deals with the provision of financial information. If one party to a relationship has an obligation to support their children and that obligation is ordered by the court, the question always arises, "Have they got an increase in their income over the past year, and can they pay more support?" On a daily basis throughout this province, we have the party receiving support going to court essentially to find out if there's any more money to be had, if the other party has received an increase in income.

You know, there's no requirement that the party paying support actually provide that disclosure without an order—no ongoing obligation to provide that information. Why shouldn't there be? We are, after all, talking about support for your children. If your income has gone down, we want to know about it. If your income has gone up, we want to know about it. So let's make it easy.

What we've done in this piece of legislation is say, "Let's take the mystery out of it. They are your children. There's only a certain amount of income. Let's make sure both sides know what it is. We take the tension out, we take the stress out, and we make it clear and transparent." That's what this piece of legislation does. It just requires annual financial disclosure so everybody knows where they stand. That's in the best interests of the familial relationship, even if it is coming apart, and that is in the best interests of the children.

All members of this House will, of course, actively engage in a consideration of this piece of legislation. What I ask is that in looking at this legislation we support it, because what it does at the end of the day is protect the partners from threats or harm, protects our children and helps streamline the resolution of these very difficult and challenging family disputes. At the end of the day, it addresses the issues which have been at the heart of the comment and legislative proposals by all members of this House, including the piece of legislation that it is proposed to repeal, not because it was bad at heart—because it was good; Mr. O'Toole's bill spoke to the very essence of what we're trying to get to—but because it didn't seem to be able to be applied to those that he and all members of the House wanted it to be applied to in the way that he wished. I remember, in listening to his comments on a number of occasions when he's risen to speak to the issue, he's essentially said, "If not this, you've got to do something." He's right, all members of this House are right, and this legislation addresses that very issue.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I look forward to speaking in greater detail with respect to Bill 133 very shortly, but at the outset I would like to commend the Attorney General for bringing these important family law reforms forward. This is an area that many people do actually come up against. There are some parts of the law where there's not



that much direct client contact, but there is a situation here where we're talking about many people who are not people with high incomes, not people who are in situations where they have equal bargaining power. So I commend the Attorney General on bringing forward these reforms to deal with some of these important situations, like splitting of pension benefits, domestic violence situations and making sure that child support calculations are done fairly. One way of ensuring that certainly is by annual financial disclosure and by making sure that the people who are entrusted with the care and custody of our children are placed in safe and caring hands so that we don't have a repeat of some of the terrible situations that we've heard about fairly recently.

These are all important issues. I would like to speak to them in a bit greater detail when I have my opportunity to comment on Bill 133, because there are some things that have been pointed out to me by some people who are family law practitioners, who are far more knowledgeable in this area than I am. They have pointed out some practical difficulties involved with perhaps putting this legislation into force that I hope will come to the Attorney General's attention. We will hopefully be able to deal with that in full committee hearings as we go forward.

I would also hope that we would have the opportunity to do some travel with respect to these hearings, because in situations especially involving victims of domestic violence, they're already marginalized and in very isolated situations. So I hope to expand on that a little bit further. But generally speaking, thank you to the Attorney General for bringing this forward.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I've listened very carefully to the Attorney General. I welcome the legislation because it gives us the opportunity to engage in what I say is a very important debate. I acknowledge the efforts on the part of the government to address some very critical and current issues.

My fear is that there is a superficiality, however, to this legislation, because the problems are much deeper. Most people in matrimonial difficulties use our family courts, the provincial division. It's a smaller minority that hire high-priced lawyers, that get into Superior Court with the processes that are available to them there. Notwithstanding all the best efforts of a Legislature, there are still some fundamental, intrinsic, inherent problems in our Family Court system, including the inability of, usually, women to access lawyers when they can't afford them and have to rely upon legal aid. Family law practitioners are loath to accept legal aid certificates because of the unrealistic caps on the number of hours they can devote.

The fact is that a process still has to be initiated in Family Court before this restraining order can be sought. That's why we have some concerns about the repeal of the Domestic Violence Protection Act, rather than its enactment and utilization of the immediacy in that legis-

lation. We're going to hear from Ms. Elliott in her lead comments in but a few minutes.

I also regret that the debate is commencing in the early morning session, because it's a very important one, and my fear is that people who should be listening to it won't be available or won't have access to it. But we will be furthering this, and I'll be pleased to do my lead in the days to come over the course of next week.

0930

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Indeed, the issue of family law has evolved over the last four decades in the province of Ontario, and it's always been seen, in many ways, I think, as a non-partisan issue. We think of Jim Renwick, who was the NDP justice critic in the 1960s; Arthur Wishart; Ian Scott; Roy McMurtry; the member from Kenora-Rainy River when he had the privilege of being the Attorney General for the province of Ontario; they have all built consistently on the need to improve family law reform in the province of Ontario.

Indeed, a former family member of mine, the late H. Allan Leal, was dean of Osgoode Hall and chair of the first law reform commission in the province of Ontario in the early 1960s, appointed by the Honourable John Robarts. If you look at some of his writings some 45, 46 years ago, he talked about the need for family law reform in the province of Ontario; indeed, he started the building blocks. His successors, who chaired the law reform commission in the province of Ontario, certainly built on all that good work. It's always been seen as a bit of a uniter in the Ontario Legislature to make reforms and keep building to protect some of our most vulnerable citizens in the province of Ontario.

In Peterborough today, Lynn Zimmer, the executive director of the YWCA, has embarked on a capital campaign to expand the women's shelter in Peterborough. Those shelters, of course, will be used by abused women and children who often find themselves as the victims when there is a matrimonial breakup. But often that's far too late in the process. That is after the anger and the damage has been done for those individuals. Moving forward with what the Attorney General has articulated today to strengthen family law reform in the province of Ontario is a very important step to bring civility and justice in this area of our judicial system in Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** This is an extremely comprehensive piece of legislation that deals with seven different acts: the Child and Family Services Act, Children's Law Reform Act, Courts of Justice Act, Family Law Act, Change of Name Act—it's extremely comprehensive, to say the least.

I hope that when the bill goes to committee, the government will change the tactics that it's had up until this date, listen very carefully to the presenters during those hearings and during the committee discussion, and take seriously the amendments that may be put forward



regarding this act. I well remember when the Premier, Mr. McGuinty, was first sworn in, in 2003, he stood in this House and made a very eloquent speech at the time. One of the things I remember from the speech was that he said, "No one of us is smarter than all of us." In that regard, I would hope, at this juncture of his tenure, that we would listen to the amendments that are put forward. This bill is in serious need of a number of amendments and hopefully the government, during that period in committee, will listen very carefully to the presentations that will take place during that period of time.

So, with that, this is an extremely comprehensive bill, one that is badly needed in many areas and perhaps can go much further than it does in its current form. We look forward to that debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Attorney General, you have up to two minutes to respond.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** I want to thank the members from Whitby–Oshawa, Welland, Peterborough and Halton for their comments and suggestions. I look forward to the debate and the recommendations.

I think you're absolutely right, I say to the member for Halton, that we do require the collective wisdom of those in the House and the people of Ontario outside the House. Indeed, when you take a look at some of the provisions of this bill, such as those dealing with restraining orders, and you acknowledge that it has been the collective wisdom of the House that we move on this area, you wonder why it has taken so long. One of the challenges in this area is that there are many, many excellent suggestions for going further or doing a little less. It is a delicate balance coming up with the approach that can actually work and that can make sure that we afford the protections within the limits of the law that we all wish. So I look forward to the discussion.

I take the suggestions from the member for Oshawa–Whitby, and I look forward to her more extended comments shortly. I take the suggestions from the member from Welland.

Of course, there are always more issues that we can address, more issues that we should address. The legislation can address some of them. Not every brick constructs the wall, but you do need some bricks to make the wall. This is a number of the very good bricks in here that we need to put together in order to extend the protections that we all wish.

I appreciate the support from the member for Peterborough and his good advice. He obviously comes from very strong legal stock, with his family having headed the first law commission in the province of Ontario. Congratulations to him for becoming a lawyer in practice, if not in name—in a good way.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I welcome the opportunity to speak to Bill 133, An Act to amend various Acts in relation to certain family law matters and to repeal the Domestic Violence Protection Act, 2000.

This is a substantive piece of legislation. It is an omnibus bill, of course, that deals with a number of

different areas of family law, some of which have been crying out for reform for a number of years, some more recently. Certainly, all are very important and deserve to have a full hearing in this House.

The problem, I would suggest, however, is that the devil is in the details, and the details are still outstanding. We don't know what those details are going to be. I would hope that the Attorney General will commit to full committee hearings on this, because we in the Progressive Conservative Party do support it in principle, but we really need to have some fundamental questions answered. We also believe that it is important to be travelling on this bill, for reasons which I indicated just a few moments earlier. There are people, particularly in northern communities and in areas where there are people who are victims of domestic violence—primarily women—who are marginalized and isolated, and we need to make sure that we give them the full opportunity to appear before the committee to give us the benefit of their views on these subjects.

I also had the opportunity during the winter break to speak to several family law practitioners in my riding, and they have expressed some preliminary concerns to me that I would like to bring out as I speak to the various sections of the act. I hope that they will be dealt with and resolved once we go before the justice committee hearings in the future.

This is, as I said, an omnibus bill, and as such, it amends eight existing statutes. But there are four main sections that I would like to address in my remarks this morning; they make amendments to the Family Law Act, the Children's Law Reform Act, the Pension Benefits Act, and the Domestic Violence Protection Act, 2000.

First of all, the amendments to the Children's Law Reform Act prescribe the type of information that must come before the court when dealing with cases involving custody of or access to a child. Section 21 of the act will require that an affidavit be filed with the court that will set out the proposed custodian's plan for the care and custody of the child and their upbringing, information regarding the person's current or previous involvement in any family or criminal proceedings, and any other relevant information that the person may be privy to that should be brought before the court. This is quite sensible and straightforward, and frankly, it's a little bit surprising that it hasn't already been required—although I suspect it probably is, but perhaps just not in the prescribed format that's required by this act.

#### 0940

There are also additional rules set out in section 21.1 that apply specifically to situations where a person who is not the parent of the child applies for custody of a child. These rules, I suspect, have been brought forward as a result of the Katelynn Sampson case, the horrendous case where a child died while in the care and custody of a person who was not her parent. It was a horrendous case of child abuse. The child was in the custody of someone who was a friend of her biological parent, and the alleged abuser had a previous criminal record and involvement, I believe, with the children's aid society.



So section 21.1 would require the applicant to obtain a criminal record check, which is sort of a basic screening mechanism that is required for most volunteer organizations and is certainly a good thing to do. They would also be required to submit a request to certain children's aid societies to provide any information they have regarding records concerning the person applying for custody, and also the clerk of the court must provide information regarding any previous Family Court proceedings involving the person who is the applicant but not the parent of the child.

It all sounds reasonable, and I think it's important to get this information, but my discussions with counsel have raised a number of concerns that we hopefully can sort out in committee but which do suggest that perhaps there was a little undue haste in drafting these sections without full consultation with the parties involved. Some of the concerns that have been expressed to me include the following: One is that the children's aid society might not currently be keeping the kinds of records that might be required by the court under this new legislation. My understanding is that the record-keeping varies from society to society, and they may need to make some fairly significant internal changes in order to be able to respond properly to the legislation.

There's also a concern regarding child protection files and privacy issues, particularly if some of the children's aid society or Family Court files bring up issues involving the applicant and another child, not the child who's the subject of the custody application here. So there is a great need to protect the privacy of the other parties who perhaps may be mentioned in the proceedings and who may not be the ones for whom the custody application is being sought.

The other issue, which is raised as a practical matter, is: Why should these requirements apply only with respect to someone applying who's not the biological parent of the child? Surely, if this is a good thing to do, to check on these previous children's aid society records and Family Court proceedings, it should be relevant with respect to the biological parents as well. So these are just some practical concerns that have been raised to me.

The next issue relates to the amendments to the Family Law Act, to require annual financial disclosure where child support orders exist. That is certainly a good procedure to be following because it's important to make sure, on an ongoing basis, that child support payments are fair and equitable. I believe that all of us in this House have heard from many constituents over the years who felt that that's not the case, that whenever there have been significant changes, there is no mechanism to deal with it expeditiously to make sure these things are adjusted as they need to be.

Section 33 of the new act amends the Family Law Act to add a section that requires: "The amount payable for the support of a child under an order may be recalculated in accordance with this act and the regulations made under this act, by the child support service established by the regulations, in order to reflect updated income

information." Then, section 69 of the Family Law Act is amended to provide that the regulations may deal with the recalculation of the child support amount and may make regulations concerning:

"(a) establishing a child support service, governing its structure and prescribing its powers, duties and functions;

"(b) governing procedures respecting the recalculation of child support amounts;

"(c) governing the recalculation of child support amounts by the child support service;" (d) also provides for a review or appeal procedure, and then (e) excludes "specified classes of provisions for child support from recalculation."

There is a very substantive issue here that is being left entirely to regulation. I have heard from the family law practitioners to whom I've spoken. They have asked me to put it to the Attorney General how strongly they feel that members of the family law bar—that there must be broad consultation before this child support adjustment service is put into place and that the regulations are not a sufficient way of dealing with that.

I would like to specifically refer to some of the comments that have been passed on to me by a family law lawyer in my area who says, with respect to the whole issue of this child support recalculation:

"I am not at all clear how this would be effected. It seems that a new bureaucracy would have to be created to do this. This would add another layer to the child support enforcement process. The most logical way to do this would be to have this new service added to the Family Responsibility Office, as the changed amount of support would have to be enforced for this to have any effect. The Family Responsibility Office is already a disastrous branch of the government. The computer system is badly antiquated and cannot properly deal with the demands currently upon it. The staff, although doing their best, cannot properly deal with what is currently before them. The addition of this responsibility would be unwieldy at best and a complete disaster at worst."

Also, "There should be some way to ensure that only those requesting a change in child support are involved in this process.

Also, "The calculation of child support can become very complicated if there are expenses pursuant to section 7 of the child support guidelines (proportionate sharing of daycare, medical and extraordinary extra-curricular expenses.) Then, proportionate contributions by each parent must be established. The cost after income tax must be determined, and that split according to the proportions. The problem, of course, is that not all expenses are treated the same and not all have income tax deductions associated with them. There may also be other income tax benefits or deductions available to one party and not the other. This must all be factored in to determine the correct amount of support to be paid."

Additionally, "This provision does not seem to take into account that some families do not wish to have child support reviewed every year for non-legal reasons.

Finally, "There is nowhere any mention of how any adjustment will be enforced if the calculation is done on



a retroactive basis. This could result in hardship to the payer.”

All of which is to say that there are some significant concerns with respect to this recalculation issue. I hope that we will have the opportunity to explore it in much greater depth once we get into committee.

The third point relates to the amendments to the Pension Benefits Act and the Family Law Act. This is an issue—and I would certainly agree with the Attorney General—that has been very problematic in family law for a number of years. This is with respect to the division of pensions upon family breakdowns.

For most people, the two largest assets that they will ever have are the value of their home and the value of their pension. Certainly when you're dealing with a matrimonial breakup and how to deal with the matrimonial home, that's relatively straightforward. A value can be assigned to it, the property can then be sold and the spouses can be paid out their 50% interest less any other arrangements that are made between them. In some cases, of course, one spouse makes arrangements to buy out the other person's share. That's relatively easy to deal with.

But we certainly have been hearing from family law practitioners that pensions are much more difficult to deal with, because the valuation is, first of all, more complicated, and secondly, because most separating spouses don't have sufficient liquidity in order to pay out one spouse the value of the other spouse's pension within their pension plan.

What's proposed under this new legislation in Bill 133 is to allow for a valuation of a pension and then do a division to determine the value of the share of the person who is the pension holder and then to allow for a transfer of the other person's share into a separate account. This can already be done federally, under the Pension Benefits Division Act, so that the pensions of federal civil servants and crown agency employees can be dealt with in this way. The new system proposes similar mechanisms to allow for this type of pension splitting and to allow pensions to be divided in a fair and equitable manner.

So this is an important issue to be dealt with. Like the Attorney General, I would also like to acknowledge the tremendous work that's been done over many years by many justice partners in this area, including the Family Law Working Group of the CBAO, CATALPA, the Law Society of Upper Canada, the Advocates' Society, the Law Commission of Ontario and many other individuals and organizations. This is a very important step forward in family law, and, indeed, the only concerns that have been expressed to me relate to the actual mechanics of the calculation and not to the overall concept of pension division itself.

0950

Bill 133 amends the Pension Benefits Act by setting out several new sections that allow members of the pension plan and their spouses to apply to the administrator of their pension plan for a statement of the net family law value of the pension at a particular period in time, and

then to apply for a transfer of a lump sum to a plan for the other spouse's benefit.

Again, it sounds very straightforward and very sensible. It would allow for, hopefully, a minimum of costs involved in this. But, again, I would like to reiterate directly some of the concerns that have been expressed to me by family law practitioners in this respect. I hope that this will get a full hearing in committee hearings.

So if I may quote from the letter that I received here: “This proposed amendment is seriously flawed. Pension administrators aren't qualified to determine the value of a pension. Under the Family Law Act, the value of a pension for the purposes of equalization of net family property is the amount of money that would have to be invested now to generate the amount the employee will receive from the pension at retirement. This amount changes depending on when the employee retires. Also, the value must be based on a number of assumptions, including assumptions about indexing of the plan, actuarially accurate mortality, interest rates, and income tax liability upon retirement. When an actuary “assists” with this, he or she provides a detailed opinion of the family law value, often with different scenarios depending on when the employee retires.

“There is no certainty of what the cost of this would be to the employee if their staff complete the valuation.

Also, “There is a perceived conflict of interest or bias if the employer is providing the value of their employee's pension.”

So if one person has been working for a particular company for a number of years and they have a pension and it's going to be divided by their pension administrator, I think it is reasonable for the other spouse to be concerned about how that's going to be done, upon what basis, and whether the information concerning how it's being calculated is going to be presented fully to them.

The other issue is, “If pension administrators value the pension, how does a party who disagrees with the value have the valuation critiqued or checked?

Also, “Pension administrators have no incentive to provide this information in a timely fashion. Their delay could inordinately delay the settlement of a matter entirely.

“When the Family Law Act was first proclaimed, some employers provided valuations of pensions. They weren't acceptable to the courts.

“It is unclear how the pension transfer will occur. This is a needed change to the legislation, as currently pensions are some of the largest assets to be equalized, but often parties do not have cash available to make the payment. Federally regulated pensions and pensions in some other provinces can be transferred at source, which would be beneficial to many parties. Unfortunately, it is often difficult to determine the terms under which the pension benefits remain locked in, until what date, and whether there are any circumstances under which application may be made to have them withdrawn prematurely.

“There is difficulty as pension plans may opt out of the transfer scheme, making it very difficult to deal with



a pension payout. There will be difficulties getting pension administrators to co-operate with respect to a lump sum being deposited from another plan, when it can be released to the receiving party, under what terms, how its growth prior to its release is to be calculated," and so on. "There may also be taxation issues.

"Allowing the pension equalization to be left with the originating plan could cause a host of problems for the pension administrator. There must be some confidence that pensions would agree to this prior to its implementation. It could result in a huge increase in administrative work for the pension plan.

"Section 3(3) allows for restrictions to be prescribed—presumably by regulation. This is inappropriate without proper consultation and publication.

"Restricting the pension transfer to 50% of the family law value of the pension may defeat the purpose that is trying to be achieved by allowing the pension transfer. If the total equalization payment owed is greater than this percentage and there are no other assets with which to satisfy the equalization, such limitation is unduly restrictive."

So there is certainly a host of issues relating to the pension benefits division issue. While the concept itself is a great idea, I think there are a lot of issues that need to be worked out once we get into committee. So I'll leave that. Hopefully, the Attorney General will speak to his colleagues about that.

Finally, and certainly not the least, is the whole issue of domestic violence that is dealt with in Bill 133. There is a history here that I think is relevant to discuss in perhaps short order, in order to understand how we've gotten to the changes that are suggested by Bill 133.

The Domestic Violence Protection Act, 2000, was originally brought forward by my predecessor, the previous member for Whitby-Oshawa. It would have allowed—

#### *Interjection.*

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** You know who that would be.

That would have allowed spouses, former spouses and persons in dating relationships to apply to the court for an emergency intervention order without notice to the respondent in situations where there was an urgent concern about a risk of harm to a person. The emergency intervention order could restrain the respondent from being near any specified person or place or from contacting any such person or engaging in any specified conduct that is threatening, annoying or harassing; require the respondent to vacate the applicant's residence; require police to escort a specified person to the applicant's residence to remove a person's belongings; and require a peace officer to seize weapons and weapons permits where the weapons were used or threatened to be used to commit domestic violence.

It is important to note that under this legislation, designated judges or justices of the peace would be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to hear these applications without notice, and that any breaches of these orders could be enforced by peace officers under the Criminal Code.

For whatever reason—and this was before my time here—this act was given royal assent in December 2000 but was never proclaimed. It was, however, essentially restated and brought forward by my friend and colleague the member for Durham in May 2007 as Bill 10, the Lori Dupont Act (Domestic Violence Protection), 2007. This bill was approved and sent to the social policy committee and never saw the light of day again. That was the bill that the Attorney General was speaking to in his comments during his leadoff speech. Certainly, it wasn't a comprehensive answer to dealing with the issue of domestic violence, but it did go a long way toward trying to prevent domestic violence, to deal with it upfront and to try to make sure to protect people, but primarily women, from domestic violence.

Bill 133 does establish that restraining orders and breaches can be enforced under the Criminal Code. This has been lauded by all of the family law practitioners that I've spoken to. They see this as a major step forward. There is a concern that it is very difficult to get restraining orders. Often they are not fully enforceable; it's difficult to get them enforced by peace officers. This does go a long way toward establishing some regularity in that area, and hopefully all police services will be able to respond to that.

But it doesn't deal with or speak to all of the issues involved with getting a restraining order in the first place. It doesn't speak to the availability of getting emergency orders, intervention orders, 24/7. It doesn't speak to all of the issues of domestic violence that happen. It hasn't acknowledged the fact that domestic violence can happen at any time. It usually doesn't happen within normal court hours; it happens in the evenings and on weekends and so on. That is something that we would like to see dealt with as part of this bill.

#### **1000**

I would say that in all of the efforts in Ontario—and I'm not speaking only specifically of this government—I think we are quite behind many other jurisdictions in dealing with the whole issue of domestic violence. There are some jurisdictions in the United States, some US states, that are really light-years ahead of us. The Minnesota Statute has been pointed out to me as one that is a model to take a look at because it is a stand-alone statute that deals with domestic violence. We also have some jurisdictions in Canada that have dealt with domestic violence far more comprehensively than we have in Ontario. The Protection Against Domestic Violence Act in Alberta goes even further: It is, first of all, a stand-alone statute that recognizes the importance of dealing with domestic violence as a major issue; it also goes further to deal with dating relationships as well as elder abuse. That also comes up in the context of domestic violence, and it's another whole area that I believe needs further extensive study. It's something that we're hearing about more and more in our community office, but that's separate and apart from what we are discussing specifically here today. I would just urge the government to take a look at this, and we would certainly be more than interested in becoming involved in that whole process as well.



I would say that we need to be more proactive with respect to domestic violence. It seems to occupy sort of a funny position. It's betwixt and between in terms of family law and criminal law. I hope that we will be able in the future, perhaps in the context of this bill, to take a wider view of the domestic violence issues. We also need to take a look at, as my colleague the member from Welland pointed out, the fact that there is a significant issue involved with women who are in need of protection getting assistance through legal aid to resolve the many issues they have to deal with, first of all with respect to getting restraining orders, with respect to support, custody and access issues, all of which need to be looked at.

So I would urge the government to take this issue more seriously and come forward with some more comprehensive reforms with respect to domestic violence, because it's certainly not going away. We've heard from previous speakers that at least 28 women, I believe, were murdered in Ontario last year due to domestic violence, most in situations that could have been prevented. I hope we will be able to take this up more urgently and to bring something forward more comprehensively to deal with the whole issue of domestic violence.

Finally, to wrap up, I would say, with respect to all the aspects of Bill 133, that we have heard the Premier saying quite often in recent days, with respect to the budget, that it's important to take the time to get this done right. I would say that the same would apply to Bill 133. It is important to get it right. These are important issues in family law, and so I would urge the government to allocate the necessary time in committee hearings so that we can hear from all of the interested parties that we need to hear from to make sure we get this right. We don't get this opportunity very often. I would certainly urge that as we move forward. We would be happy to participate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** It's always a delight to work with Ms. Elliott in the justice committee, and I look forward to working with her on this piece of legislation. She again highlights the fact that there are several distinct areas that are going to be of interest and perhaps even controversial.

The issue of paying out pensions: Look, I've got Atlas steelworkers down in Welland who paid out 50% of the valuation of their pension before they retired in an incident of a marital breakdown, and upon retirement received only a fraction of their defined benefit because the pension valuation is one thing one day, and as we face the demise of defined benefit pension plans and the collapse of existing ones, I'm afraid the issue of valuation of pensions has become a far more complicated matter than it was 25 and 30 years ago.

The matter of the repeal of the Domestic Violence Protection Act: That should have been, with all due respect, a stand-alone issue. Nobody's suggesting that the section 35 proposal isn't appropriate. Of course a Family Court should be able to issue a restraining order during

the course of proceedings before that court, but the reality is—go to any Family Court in this province and look at the dockets that those clerks and judges are dealing with, the backlogs in Family Court alone—getting before a judge is in itself a difficult and lengthy process. And in the course of that waiting time, women are getting beaten—spouses, I should say rather; partners—and murdered, notwithstanding the fact that a restraining order is, in most instances, only as good as the willingness of the party named in it to abide by that order because obviously, the restraining order in and of itself doesn't prevent the murder of spouses.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** As I listen to the debate and the talk about the splitting of pensions, I'm reminded of where we were not all that long ago on the whole issue of property rights and reminded of why I even got involved in politics and lobbying. That was in the 1970s, and it was subsequent to the *Murdoch v. Murdoch* ruling by the Supreme Court of Canada in which the Supreme Court ruled that Irene Murdoch's five months a year of work on her farm in haying and dehorning and quieting horses and driving equipment was the normal contribution of a wife, and she was denied her claim to the farm because of that. That woman died a poor woman because she didn't have the right to what was her share, to what she had worked for and what contribution she had made to it.

That caused me at the time, as a young farm woman, to look at my own situation. I was fortunately married to a man who felt it was important to have my name on the title of the property, but I found out that if my husband incurred debt at the bank, I was responsible, whether I'd signed for it or not. I found out that a lot of my farm women neighbours didn't have the same understanding husband who allowed them title to a farm, so if there was a divorce, they would have to fight to get what they had contributed to.

That was in the 1970s. I look at us now and I think that we've come a long way. We still have a lot to do, and that's what we're working on with this bill now. But in the short term, from my generation to my daughter's generation, and while they struggle over child custody and support payments and pensions and those—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. Further questions and comments?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I appreciate the opportunity to address this bill. I want to congratulate my colleague from Whitby—Oshawa. I thought she did an amazing job of dissecting this piece of legislation, because it's an important one. It's one that we in the opposition feel is a move in the right direction, but we still have a lot of questions. As members opposite, and even in my own party, know, I'm an advocate for children. This piece of legislation deals with children, insofar as the Katelynn Sampson case, so we have some questions on who will receive information and who will contribute information. We also have some questions around the children's aid society.



As you know, I had Bill 130 introduced in this Legislature. I hope to debate it this spring and I hope to have all party-support for my own omnibus bill to protect children in this province. It includes more oversight on the children's aid society. It also includes more tools for parents to protect their kids, but also for law enforcement agencies to protect children.

I see two colleagues from the city of Ottawa here today. We were gripped a week and a half ago when we found out that a resident of our city was charged with child pornography and that that individual had subjected his preschool-aged child to this. This child has since been taken into custody.

A bill like this and a bill like mine and any bill that has protection of children as its number one concern needs to be addressed by this Legislature, but also requires full public hearings because those stories need to be told. Whenever a child or a woman—or any domestic violence has occurred, and I use “violence” in terms of not just physical or sexual abuse but also verbal abuse, we have to be very concerned as a Legislature and also as a province. So I encourage the—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I've been listening attentively to the speeches so far, and I appreciate very much the member from Whitby—Oshawa's dedication to reviewing the bill, bringing recommendations from whom she's hearing from to the Legislature and making sure that the concerns are raised. I appreciate very much the Attorney General's attentiveness to this and the fact that his commitment has been stated clearly to the House that the intent of the legislation, which mirrors that of previous legislation, is to improve the system. The member from Welland advises us wisely, as always, about the nuances of the legal profession and often says—I've heard him say it, anyway, and I stand to be corrected—that lawyers have the capacity to turn the simple into the complex. Because of that, I think it's wise for us to engage in those conversations with the people who will be practising in front of the average citizenry, who need to have faith, when they stand before the judicial system, that there's equity; that there's justice; and, most importantly, what we've learned over the decades, referencing previous members' comments about history, that women are treated equally and that the children we bring into this world are treated with the utmost sensitivity and respect and not used as pawns in adults' anger.

That being said, that would be the background behind my support for this legislation. I'm looking forward to hearing some of the concerns that are out there and doing justice to this legislation in a way that allows the public to believe that we're in it for the right reasons. I look forward to the rest of the debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The honourable member from Whitby—Oshawa has up to two minutes for her response.

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I would like to thank the members from Welland, Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, Nepean—Carleton and Brant for their very thoughtful and

helpful comments. With respect to the comments made by the member from Lambton—Kent—Middlesex with respect to the Murdoch and Murdoch case, that was certainly a bit of a walk down memory lane for me. I remember studying that in family law in law school many years ago because it was pre-Family Law Reform Act, which is a long, long time ago, and the Family Law Reform Act, of course, followed after the Family Law Act. I know that she has made a major contribution to achieving equality for women involved in farming as well and has really been a trailblazer in that area. I would like to acknowledge and thank her for the work she has done in that area.

But we certainly have come a long way in the last, I guess it's 30 years now, since the Family Law Reform Act was enacted, and I think that we need to continue to make the changes that reflect our current understanding of the law and changing conditions. Some of the changes that are being made by Bill 133 will certainly go a long way to achieving equality for spouses in situations, especially where domestic violence is a concern, and will also go a long way towards protecting vulnerable children. As my colleague the member from Nepean—Carleton indicated, this has got to be our primary responsibility; we need to make sure that children are placed in safe hands, whether they're with their biological parents or with other people. The criminal record checks and the requirements that there be communication with children's aid societies and also with other family law courts to make sure that all of the relevant information is put before the court in order to make a decision are very important, because all too often there ends up being, if not miscommunication, no communication. We need to make sure that that changes, for the safety of our children.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** This House stands in recess until 10:30.

*The House recessed from 1014 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I'm pleased to welcome David Kerr, Pete Wright, Paul Johnstone, Tom O'Neill, Dave Graves, John Mearini and Richard Cunningham, all members of the OPSEU corrections bargaining team.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I would like to introduce, on behalf of the member from Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound and page Reed Bell, in the west members' gallery, his father, Norm Bell, and their friend Susan Moyer. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** My question is to the Premier. Premier, it has to do with your economic policy



flip-flops, what some would suggest are your baffling public comments that are contradicted the next day by one of your ministers, and the increasingly obvious signals that you simply don't know how to respond to our economic challenges. In a column in the *Ottawa Citizen* yesterday it was suggested that if your time as Premier will be remembered, it will be "as the Premier who fiddled and banned, banned and fiddled, until it was too late." Premier, do you recognize that your recent public musings, combined with a delayed budget, is raising real concerns about a leadership void in this province?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I always appreciate the advice and the commentary that come with the privilege of serving Ontarians as the Premier. That's to be expected, and that is healthy in a democracy. It's a good thing. But I appreciate the opportunity as well to speak to Ontarians and to help them understand what we're trying to do here on this side of the House.

A couple of things with respect to the budget in particular: We know we need to respond to some of the consequences that have been visited upon Ontarians as a result of the global recession. Folks are losing their jobs. Businesses are struggling. There is a credit crunch. Those are real, and we intend to find continuing ways to speak to those through the budget.

At the same time, Ontarians expect us to keep our eye on the future and to build a stronger economy going forward. In my supplementary, I'll tell Ontarians a bit more about what we continue to do to deal with the effects of the recession right now.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** When you have to send the Minister of Finance out to do damage control and attempt to paper over the comments of his own Premier, I think it raises legitimate concerns about the individual responsible for steering the ship.

Premier, these are challenging times: over 70,000 jobs lost in this province last month; 137,000 since November. You've publicly admitted that your five-point plan is not working. You're at best treading water while families and communities suffer and jobs flee this province. Other provinces have acted. Why haven't you?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Well, these are challenging times. There's no doubt about it whatsoever, but I think it's important that we keep some perspective. I just want to quote a colleague from across the way who recently said: "You'd think the world is falling apart. There are negative things that are happening today. But there's probably no better place to be than where we are."

The MPP for Simcoe North said that, and I believe my colleague the leader of the official opposition would in fact agree with that. There are some real challenges, but there's no better place to be to face those challenges.

With respect to our five-point plan, that involves significant investments in everything from business tax cuts to infrastructure and innovation, partnering with businesses and investing in the skills of our people. Those are all good things. We will continue to do those things. What I am saying, and what I will continue to say, is that

now we need to go deeper and further to bring about some fundamental changes in our—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you, Premier. Final supplementary.

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** I still feel good about this province, but certainly it was much better off in the hands of the government five and a half or six years ago.

In December, the Premier suggested treading water—  
*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock.  
The Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** You know, it's quite the norm for the Premier to say, "Everything is going to be okay; it's a modest contraction"—those kinds of words that he has used over the past number of years to try to supposedly deal with challenges on the economic front, especially the loss of manufacturing jobs in this province.

The reality is that other provinces in this great country have acted; Premiers leading governments in those provinces have acted. In December, New Brunswick brought in a comprehensive plan that included tax cuts, a public sector salary freeze and help for small business. Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia brought in similar plans. Their premiers didn't use—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you, Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I made this comment yesterday, and I think it's worthy of repetition: My colleagues opposite are intent on observing goings-on in other provinces and other Legislatures, and I'd ask them to pay some passing interest to what is taking place here.

Back in November 2007, we began to lay out a plan to deal with this challenge. We've made significant new investments in municipal infrastructure, for example—that was a short time ago. As well, just last Friday, together with the federal government, we made an investment of \$1 billion in communities of 100,000 or less. We invested in 289 more infrastructure projects. Just a couple of days ago, together with the Prime Minister, we invested half a billion dollars in new GO Transit infrastructure projects as well.

We're not waiting for our budget to do things. We will continue to do much along the way, as I would ask my friend to recognize.

## ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** My question is to the Premier. A few weeks ago, Mr. McGuinty had an epiphany—a moment of clarity, if you will. He said he had revised his thinking and admitted that his government was a brake on growth. He was finally ready to admit that red tape was choking our economy and that we needed to do more to create a competitive business environment.

Where did that guy go? Here we are, ready to tackle the big questions, and nothing is different. We're spending our days debating cosmetic surgery and housing for young offenders—important issues, to be sure, but hardly the most pressing matters facing us as a province.



Premier, when will we be discussing the big questions? When can Ontario expect some real action?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'm pleased to speak to the issue of red tape and the importance of our government, and governments generally, becoming more competitive. It may strike some as a little bit odd to think of government being competitive, but the fact is that we do compete against other governments around the world, but particularly in the US, when it comes to landing new investment here.

One of the things we've already done, for example, to welcome new investment has to do with our public transit projects. We had in place an environmental assessment process that sometimes took from 12 to 18 months. We have now put a cap on that. We said that those environmental assessments can take no longer than six months.

We're now looking to see where we might expand that further. When we do, we'll of course be looking for support from colleagues on the other side of the House.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** Premier, in less than 30 days, President Obama introduced the most complex, comprehensive stimulus package that the world has ever seen. Our PC government did it in 1995, bringing in a \$2.1-billion stimulus package to tackle an \$11-billion deficit, and we did it in less than 30 days. But in six years, all this government gave us was a five-point plan. Are we not supposed to talk about that anymore?

1040

The five-point plan didn't really work very well, did it, Premier? Now there's just the five-foot plan that keeps reporters at bay. You've clearly abandoned the five-point plan and are stumbling around looking for a new one. Meanwhile, the economy has gone south. Can you give us any indication of when on earth you intend to come to your senses and help Ontarians out of the economic morass that we find ourselves in because of your inaction?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'll go back to the issue of red tape, because I think that's an important one. In our recent First Ministers' meeting, one of the things that I asked the Prime Minister to consider, and I'm pleased to report that he has indicated he is prepared to pursue this, was that we just have one environmental assessment per project. At present, there are many instances where an infrastructure project demands that there be both a provincial environmental assessment and a federal environmental assessment. I believe the Prime Minister is prepared to act in that regard.

There are other ideas as well, and we're open to suggestions on the part of the opposition with respect to this. But the point I'm making to Ontarians is that, just as we have to enhance the quality of our workforce and the competitiveness of our businesses, we also have to understand that government itself has a role to play in acting in a more competitive, friendly and open manner when it comes to investment.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** We've been giving the Premier advice for the last five years, none of which he has taken.

In that period of time, he has taken Ontario from the top to the bottom, from have-lots to have-nots. We have seen so many thousands of jobs lost in manufacturing, in forestry, and even in the high-tech industry. We have a bloated bureaucracy, a high unemployment rate, a looming deficit and a backward tax regime, but all Mr. McGuinty can do is blame everyone and everything else. How can vulnerable Ontarians trust your leadership with such a track record? Why should they believe you now?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** It's interesting that my colleague would close with a plea made on behalf of vulnerable Ontarians. Let me just offer this assurance to vulnerable Ontarians and Ontario families generally: We will not be reducing welfare rates. We will not freeze increases in the minimum wage. We will not make cuts to nurses. We will not make cuts to teachers. We will not fire water inspectors. We will do everything we can to protect the significant gains we've made with respect to public services. We will hang on to the gains that we've made in our schools. We will hang on to the gains we've made in our hospitals and in the delivery of health care in general.

Those are the kinds of assurances that I think our vulnerable Ontarians and families generally are looking for, especially at this point in time.

## AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I have a question to the Premier. With each passing day, news out of the auto sector gets worse. Reports suggest that Chrysler is considering shutting its Etobicoke casting plant. Other reports suggest that a shift at Chrysler's Windsor minivan plant could be chopped. Thousands of jobs are on the line. The other day you were musing that in the grand scheme of things, it's relatively good news. So why are you so out of touch?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I've had many opportunities to speak to this issue and I don't mind speaking to this again.

As my friend would understand, the auto sector here in Ontario is part of a fully integrated North American industry that extends its reach now into Mexico as well. Our government is working very closely with the federal government, which is reaching out to decision-makers in Washington and in Detroit, to see what we can do to lend strength to the foundation of the auto sector.

It's a very difficult time for the auto sector, but more importantly, it's a difficult time for the 400,000 workers here in Ontario who depend for their livelihood on that sector. We will continue to do everything that we can to lend some strength and stability to the sector.

I know my colleague will have more questions for me in the supplementary.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** The kinds of words you used the other day do not give people much comfort. You know that things are getting worse. General Motors is submitting a plan on Friday which may call for up to \$4 billion



in additional government aid. GM is shutting down its Oshawa truck plant in May. A transmission factory in Windsor will close next year. GM's pension plan is underfunded. Jobs and pensions for thousands of auto workers are at risk. Again, how could you say that in the grand scheme of things, it's relatively good news?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I said that because it's true, and I'll tell you one of the things that leads me to be somewhat optimistic in this regard.

Because of the investments that we've made with Chrysler and GM, and the new flex plants that we have in place, it makes us particularly attractive to decision-makers in Washington and Detroit with respect to the future of the industry in Ontario.

I want folks in Washington and Detroit in particular to understand that we are part of the solution. Given our track record, the productivity of our workers, the quality of our product, I want them to understand that we are there. Furthermore, working with the federal government, we're making it perfectly clear that both governments are committed to the future of this industry as well.

So, given what might have come out of the recent decisions in Washington, I think that on the whole it is good news for us.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** This is how it looks to the average Ontarian: Jobs are being lost on a monthly basis in the tens of thousands; entire communities are seeing economic devastation; key sectors of the economy are in crisis.

You don't have a plan, and we're waiting another month before we see a budget. Again, you say in the grand scheme of things that things are relatively good. You just reiterated your support for that position. Good news for whom, exactly?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, given what we thought might come out of the proposals put forward in Washington, there was a possibility that Ontario would have come up dramatically short, but we did not. I know that if my colleague had followed this a little bit more closely, he would have understood what was at stake. I think folks who follow this closely understand that, in fact, we've done better than we could have.

Now I'll tell you where we are on a go-forward basis. We're now waiting for the proposals to come in from Chrysler Canada and GM Canada to the federal government and the provincial government. We're eagerly awaiting those to find out what new demands might be placed on us. We are prepared to be there on behalf of taxpayers. But, again, we place heavy obligation on the workers, on the executive, on the parts suppliers, the shareholders—everybody—to make sure that we are fully committed to the future of this sector in our province and particularly those 400,000 workers.

#### GREEN POWER GENERATION

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Again to the Premier: It's absolutely crucial for Ontario to start making the kinds of

investments that will make Ontario a leader in clean, green energy projects. Literally tens of thousands of good-paying jobs are at stake in the next five years alone. So, why, when the rest of the world has been moving ahead on this full tilt, have you been falling behind, ignoring what the reality is? Why has it taken you so long to actually recognize that there is a green energy revolution going on on this planet?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** I would have thought that my honourable friend, a constituent of mine, in his travels across the breadth of the province of Ontario, might have borne witness to at least one wind turbine out there—one of the hundreds of wind turbines, representing more than 1,000 megawatts of wind turbines, representing more than \$2.5 billion of investment in wind turbines—that the honourable member might have found some evidence that the revolution began here in Ontario because of the commitment of this government to get our province off of coal.

On Monday in this Legislature, we will move forward with a historic act, a green energy act, that, if passed by this Legislature, will build on the momentum that we have now and place Ontario at the forefront of North American jurisdictions on this subject. We welcome the honourable member to open his eyes and see what has already happened here.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Minister of Research and Innovation.

Please continue.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I actually have had my eyes open. I've actually had a chance to go to Europe to see where large-scale investment in green energy is making a difference to the economy.

Here in Ontario, actions speak louder than words. In the last two weeks, you rejected 30 out of 38 proposed wind projects. We need to take the lead on investment in renewable energy. You've dropped the ball, you've been missing in action, on developments that have been happening across this planet. When are you going to take substantial action to tie into the green energy revolution?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** I don't know what planet that honourable member has been on that he refers to in his question, but it sure hasn't been the landscape of the province of Ontario, because if he travelled to the shores of any of our Great Lakes, whether in Sault Ste. Marie or on the shores of Lake Erie or Lake Huron, he would have borne witness to government policy that has resulted so far in more than \$2.5 billion of investment in the ground and, today, producing 100 megawatts of new, clean, green energy for the people of the province of Ontario.

1050

We agree that there are yet more opportunities. Building on the momentum that we've created, in this Legislature on Monday we will introduce a green energy act. I am quite certain that when the honourable member stops



long enough to take a look at the initiatives that we've led and those that we are moving forward with, he will want to stand in his place and say, "I support this bill."

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I have to say, at a minimum, I do find the minister entertaining. The simple reality, Minister, is that you are welded to a nuclear future which will cut off that opening, that future for us with green energy. Are you going to tell us right now that your green energy plan supersedes your commitment to nuclear and that you are choosing a new path for Ontario? Is that what you are going to say to us today?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** What I will repeat in this Legislature today and what we will show on Monday through the introduction of this bill is that because this Premier and this government had the courage to put Ontario on a path to eliminate our reliance on fossil fuels in the form of coal, we have an extraordinary opportunity to continue to evolve our energy supply mix to one of the cleanest, greenest energy supply mixes to be found anywhere in the world. We have had demonstration in hundreds of different projects in the province of Ontario of the investment in green energy. We agree that because of the momentum that has been created, we have even greater opportunities to raise the bar on our ambitions as Ontarians and move forward with the green economy to produce at least 50,000 jobs over the next three years.

#### ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** A question to the Premier: Premier, with 72,000 lost full-time jobs since the last election, it's very clear that your so-called five-point economic plan has become nothing but a five-star economic flop. People worried about their jobs, worried about paying mortgages, hear the Premier attempt to console them with bland expressions that he tries to pass off for real leadership. In response to a series of layoff announcements several months ago, the Premier said, "Trust me, folks. This too shall pass." He told the Windsor Chamber of Commerce, decimated with the highest unemployment rate in all of Canada, "We're going to be okay."

When will Premier Dad abandon this empty and patronizing rhetoric and table immediately an economic recovery plan to create jobs in this province?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'm always pleased to speak to the advice offered by my well-intentioned colleagues. Let me just remind you of some of the things that we just did recently with respect to the Building Canada fund projects announced on Friday. We announced 289 separate projects in communities of 100,000 people or less. Those include everything from the expansion of an airport in the Algonquin Highlands to a new water tower in Minden Hills township, to replacing the sewage treatment plant in Merrickville, to the Hanes Road reconstruction in Huntsville, to repaving the runway at the airport in Atikokan, and to so many other projects. Those are the kinds of things that we have done and we'll

continue to do to create jobs in the short term and enhance our competitiveness in the long term.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Another favourite: One of the Premier's recent expressions is, "It is hard to understand what is happening in the economy if all you read are the headlines"—unbelievable. Look at the headlines: "Ontario's Back is to the Wall: Its Industrial Pillars Crumbling"—Globe and Mail, January 24; "Officially a 'Have-not,' Ontario Receives Funding Boost"—Globe and Mail, January 27; "Job Losses Smash Records"—Toronto Star, February 7.

Premier, beneath those headlines are some 72,000 people who have lost full-time jobs, seniors worrying about balancing between paying their hydro bills or affording groceries, working families concerned about paying off their mortgage, and they get these kind of bland statements from the Premier in the guise of leadership.

All we've heard this week, Premier—we've asked for action—is what you're not going to do. I'm coming to think that your decision about deep thinking and new ideas is actually going to be much ado about nothing and a return to your tax—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I don't understand what my friend doesn't understand. I've been talking all day today and yesterday about the kinds of projects that we continue to invest in. This year, for example, we have committed, so far, to over \$8 billion in infrastructure projects. Last year it was \$10 billion. My friend has come to the understanding just of late that investing in infrastructure and stimulating the economy on an ongoing basis is something worthwhile. We have over 100 major construction projects under way right now. That's something we've been doing for a long time now. We will continue to build on the strengths of our five-point plan. Practically speaking, that means we're going to continue to invest in innovation, infrastructure, skills development and business tax cuts and in partnerships with our businesses. Those are working for us. We will continue to do more on a go-forward basis.

#### POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** The question is to the Premier. The education Premier himself has repeatedly said that the economic recovery of this province is tied to the knowledge economy. When the University of Western Ontario is talking about early retirements, job cuts and tuition fee hikes to cope with a \$41-million revenue shortfall, it's puzzling. Your economic plan hinges on the health of the post-secondary education system, yet the University of Western Ontario is talking about revenue shortfalls. What are you going to do to stop the cuts and tuition fee hikes at the University of Western Ontario?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.



**Hon. John Milloy:** I appreciate the honourable member's question. I think all of us recognize that with the current economic downturn we're seeing a number of public institutions that are under pressure, but at the same time I don't think the honourable member can ignore the fact of a \$6.2-billion investment made by this government in our post-secondary education. Under the Reaching Higher plan, in 2008-09 the government will allocate \$3.019 billion in total operating transfer payments to universities. That's a 58% increase since we took office, and the results have been 100,000 more students in our colleges and universities and one of the highest rates of post-secondary education participation in the western world.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** The minister forgets to tell us that we are number 10 in per capita funding, and with these cuts, it's going to get worse. Fanshawe College is looking at layoffs to address a budget shortfall of \$6.5 million, and Brock University is forecasting a budget shortfall of \$17 million and budget cuts of 7% across the board, all of which add up to fewer full-time faculty, higher class sizes and more debt for students. It is when the economy is sliding that you are supposed to be making strategic investments for the future. That's what the Premier is saying. But how are these dramatic cuts fulfilling his and your promises?

**Hon. John Milloy:** I disagree with the honourable member when he talks about, "Now is the time to make strategic investments." The fact is, we made those strategic investments to allow Ontario to weather this current economic storm, and the results have been impressive: 100,000 more students in post-secondary studies, and graduation rates have gone up 8% in colleges and 3% at universities; last year, Ontario's universities hired approximately 1,800 new faculty, about half of them full-time; last year, over 37,000 students from around the world chose Ontario's universities, which I think demonstrates the faith that the world has in one of the finest post-secondary education systems on Earth. Coming from a member who is part of a government that cut funding to post-secondary education, eliminated up-front grants to students and allowed tuition to skyrocket, I find it a little rich.

#### ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** My question is for the Minister of International Trade and Investment. During the last six months, the unprecedented turmoil in the global economic system has had a significant impact on our families and in our communities here in Ontario. Although our province has done many things prudently to be able to meet the serious economic challenges, we feel the effects of a global economic crisis. Falling commodity prices have caused the Canadian dollar to fall against other world currencies. Tightening credit markets and a declining US economy have caused export revenues to fall for many Ontario companies. Despite all this,

your ministry has promoted Ontario and brought new investments to the province.

**1100**

How are you enhancing Ontario's ability to compete with other jurisdictions, and how is our province attracting new investments, new jobs, and innovative opportunities here to Ontario?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I'm very happy to receive the question from our MPP Delaney.

These are unprecedented economic times, and I think it's important, now more than ever, that the message of Ontario gets out around the world. So we are stepping up a very aggressive plan to get the Ontario message out to the world.

We have a tremendous amount to offer. In particular, the markets that we're chasing—we are lining that up with Ontario's climate change agenda. In the middle of January, for example, Ontario announced its partnership with a company out of California, Better Place, which is a leading-edge, innovation-type company developing electrical infrastructure for the electric car, which lines up very nicely with Ontario's skill set as the largest manufacturer of cars in North America.

It's important that we look ahead to what Ontario can offer international companies that can do business in Ontario. Even in these challenging times, we will be more aggressive than ever.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Minister, I'd like to focus on your comments about Ontario's investment in green technology.

With the rapid increase in the world price of oil, consumer demand has quickly shifted toward cleaner and greener vehicles. Ontario's auto sector is one of the major drivers of our economy—pun intended. This partnership with Better Place is a major step toward sustainable transportation. Electric vehicles and a related battery-charging infrastructure will create jobs, economic growth and benefit the environment. For every 10,000 electric vehicles on the road, Ontario will offset an estimated 40,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide annually. This technology of tomorrow will fundamentally shape the future of the global automotive industry.

What role might other local renewable energy sources play in this interesting initiative? And in addition to a head office—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you, Minister?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** Thank you so much to this member from Mississauga—Streetsville.

It's really important in our relationship with Better Place out of California that they are linking up with Bullfrog, so that all of the energy they'll be plugging into will in fact be green energy. It is very much a part of Ontario's larger, smart-grid approach to how Ontario will be clean and green, and that's the message that we're taking out to the world.

Our opportunity with Better Place means that we, as a government, can now consider—which we're in the



midst of—the kind of good public policy that can lead the consumer to adopt the electric car—a very important initiative.

A large jurisdiction like Ontario will lead North America where every major car company is going, with every one of them with an electric car program. That's what Ontario's name will be around the world, and that's why so many around the world are now looking to Ontario as their place to invest.

#### MINIMUM WAGE

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** My question is to the Minister of Labour. The minister will know that today the Canadian Federation of Independent Business has sent an open letter to him. In recent weeks, the CFIB has been flooded with calls from their members, who are worried about the upcoming increase in the minimum wage. Already struggling to weather the current economic slowdown, the last thing these small companies need is another increase in the cost of doing business in Ontario.

I have heard from my chamber of commerce loud and clear that businesses in Sarnia-Lambton, particularly in the hospitality industry, are working hard to see that they don't need to lay off people, but any increase in their labour costs will cause layoffs. Accordingly, the CFIB is asking you to freeze the minimum wage at \$8.75. Already, at \$8.75, it is the highest minimum wage in Canada.

Minister, did you receive this letter dated February 19, and what is your response to the small businesses of Ontario?

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** I want to thank the honourable member for the opportunity to talk about our commitment to the minimum wage.

After nine long years of having the minimum wage frozen in this province, this government has taken a prudent and responsible measure to increasing that minimum wage. We've done that every year. The minimum wage will be going up to \$9.50 on March 31.

The minimum wage is part of something that we feel very proud of on this side of the aisle, and that's our poverty reduction strategy, helping those vulnerable workers. We want to ensure that those vulnerable workers work with dignity and respect and are provided a minimum wage that has kept pace. Unlike the previous government, we keep in touch with all workers in this province. We want to ensure that there is that safety net, there is that—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Minister, even studies commissioned by your own government have warned about the implications of minimum wage increases. In a 2007 report prepared for your Minister of Finance, Morley Gunderson found that increasing the minimum wage leads to slower growth in employment, that a higher minimum wage in Ontario relative to other provinces would likely exacerbate the adverse employment effects,

and that the increase in payroll costs is almost three times as high for small firms as large companies. The minimum wage is a blunt instrument to curb poverty, with little or no effect on reducing overall poverty rates.

The chamber also recommends considering mandatory and regular minimum wage reviews that include an economic impact assessment on the provincial economy.

Minister, will you at least agree to examine the impact of this planned minimum wage increase on the provincial economy, which is already suffering under your government's watch?

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** I say to the member that, yes, of course we will work with all our partners—with the CFIB, with small business, with employers, with trade unions—to look at the economy holistically. We've taken a balanced approach, Mr. Speaker, unlike that party, where they just froze the minimum wage for nine years, or the NDP, which has looked at an irresponsible approach to increasing the minimum wage by a huge number that would impact businesses and where there would be job losses.

We feel that we've moved in a responsible way, listening to stakeholders in a balanced approach to ensuring that we are addressing those vulnerable workers and working with small business. So I will look at anything that is sent to my office. We have met with many small business owners and look at continuing this balanced response—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** My question is to the Minister of Correctional Services. When is the minister going to improve the very stressful, overcrowded, dangerous and deteriorating working conditions faced each and every day by more than 5,000 of Ontario's corrections workers?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** While I appreciate the question, we'll do a little comparison here. We are improving those conditions. We're building new facilities: the Toronto South Detention Centre; the South West Detention Centre. When they were the government, they said no to new facilities. We're increasing bed capacity; in excess of 1,200 new beds will be used. When they were in government, they said no to increased capacity. We're leading a Canadian study on the changing face of correctional services. When they were in government, they isolated themselves from everyone.

Yes, we understand there are some challenges. Yes, we are addressing those challenges, unlike what they did when they were the NDP government in Ontario.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Listen, I say to the minister, I'm no fan of Bob Rae either. Look—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Mike Colle:** —hiding in the washroom for five years.



**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Perhaps the member from Eglinton–Lawrence wants to be sent there. Please continue.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Look, corrections workers do a job that very few of us could handle, and they do it under atrocious circumstances. This government has ignored the problem and now decides that the best solution is to punish those workers by slashing sick-day provisions. The union is willing to work with the government in addressing absenteeism. Why won't this government stop the attack on corrections workers and address the working conditions that are at the heart of this public safety issue?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** Nothing could be further from the truth, to be perfectly honest. We respect our correctional officers. We certainly hope that they will, in conjunction with government services, come to some agreement.

1110

But let's talk about respecting workers. Let's talk about really, really understanding the importance of these correctional officers. They did: They imposed the social contract, which cost them jobs, which gave them horrible working conditions, and yet they purport to stand up for the working men and women in Ontario. They have no credibility when it comes to supporting the working people of Ontario, including correctional services officers.

### DIALYSIS

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. People with chronic kidney disease often depend on regular dialysis treatment or a kidney transplant to survive. Due to Ontario's aging population and the growing number of people with diabetes and high blood pressure, the demand for kidney dialysis has been increasing by more than 7% every year. Some residents of my riding and York region depend on these crucial dialysis services. Can the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care tell the House how he plans to expand access to dialysis services in Vaughan and York region? How is he helping local residents who are suffering from chronic kidney disease?

**Hon. David Caplan:** I'd like to thank the member from Richmond Hill for his question and for his continued advocacy for the people of York region.

On February 5 I joined the member from Richmond Hill and the member from Vaughan, where we announced a new dialysis satellite unit and outpatient clinic at the York Central Hospital. When the satellite unit opens later this year, it will have 24 new dialysis stations.

Increasing access to kidney dialysis service is part of the Ontario government's four-year, \$741-million diabetes strategy. Creating satellite units such as the one in Vaughan enables people to receive dialysis treatment closer to home. The government is deeply committed to improving the quality of life for those living with chronic conditions like kidney disease, and that's one of my top

priorities. This new dialysis unit is just one of the many ways in which the government is increasing access to health care in Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** I want to thank the minister for his answer and for responding to a clear need for more services in the greater York region community.

Residents of my riding are thankful that this dialysis unit will help more of their neighbours and family members get treatment closer to home. My constituents will truly benefit from this latest investment.

But I am wondering whether the benefits of this investment will extend beyond the borders of Vaughan and York region. I'm wondering whether it will help the health care system as a whole. I ask the Minister of Health: How does adding more dialysis units in Vaughan and opening the satellite clinic help improve the overall health care system today? How will it help growing communities like Vaughan to ensure that its residents will have quality health care for years to come?

**Hon. David Caplan:** When it comes to health care, this government is doing what previous governments failed to do. Simply, we are planning for the long-term needs of the people of this province. The member is quite correct: York region is growing rapidly, and that's why we are investing in resources and infrastructure like this dialysis unit today, because we want to be able to meet future demands. When fully operational, the dialysis unit will have 33 stations. It will have the capacity to provide treatment to over 30,000 additional dialysis treatments per year. That equals to upward of 5,000 visits for 200 patients annually.

I recognize that in order to bring down wait times, we need to keep Ontarians out of emergency rooms. That starts with bringing health care closer to patients' homes. This helps people to better manage their chronic diseases like kidney disease. Chronic disease management is a big priority for me and for this government.

### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Frank Klees:** My question is to the Premier. York regional council is meeting today. They'll be voting on a budget measure that will add \$12 million to the backs of York region taxpayers for the purpose of funding the shortfall of health care funding for capital costs for the three hospitals in York region.

My question to the Premier is this: Why is his government downloading the cost of capital funding for our hospitals onto municipalities and ultimately onto the backs of property taxpayers at a time when they can least afford it?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** I view the actions taken by York region council as actions that should be applauded. If we look at the history of capital funding for hospitals in the province of Ontario over decades, it used to be the case, actually, that local communities paid the entire bill. Over time, that has transitioned in exactly the



opposite direction, where the government of Ontario today is providing the highest rate—90%—of the hard infrastructure costs associated with the projects.

We recognize, of course, that people are sensitive about costs associated with tax increases. But at the same time, we have noticed an extraordinarily strong degree of support for the ongoing construction and investment in infrastructure in hospitals, and it's very, very much in keeping with that that a community contribution coming through York region should be moved forward.

This is not a precedent in York region; this is done in many, many communities across the province of Ontario. We applaud the leadership of the politicians in York region.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** The Minister of Energy and Infrastructure may applaud the politicians in York region; they are not applauding him, they are not applauding the Minister of Health and they are not applauding the Premier for forcing them to put onto the backs of their taxpayers, on the property tax bill, a bill that is rightfully to be paid by the provincial government.

The Minister of Health clearly said that York region is a rapidly growing community: 35,000 new people a year go into that region. It's very clear that this government is not coming to the table with adequate provincial health care dollars. I'm calling on the Premier to reconsider his policy about how they are funding health care. Essentially, they are downloading the responsibility that has always been the province's onto the municipalities. Will he consider changing his policy?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** I'm not sure what the honourable member is up to—I'm not sure why he's getting this spot in the lineup—because his comments today stand in contradiction with members in that party who have encouraged and supported their local communities that are participating in paying the community share toward massive investment in hospital infrastructure.

Look at the York region picture: Southlake hospital in the last five years has grown from a very small hospital to one of our most important hospitals in the province of Ontario; Markham-Stouffville will soon move forward with a very, very substantial investment; at the Richmond Hill hospital, we have under way right now a very substantial project toward new development; and in Vaughan, there is a very, very strenuous demand on the part of that community to move forward with a hospital.

All across the province of Ontario, municipalities have determined that in order to leverage billions of dollars in government investment in new hospital infrastructure, they should make a contribution totalling up to 10%. Therefore—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you, Minister.

#### MINISTER'S EXPENSES

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is to the Premier. On six trips, the Minister of International Trade spent more

than \$50,000 on business-class airfare and stays at luxurious, posh hotels with room service. Just a couple of examples of many: a \$60 English breakfast ordered to her hotel room, a \$708 night at the Monarch Hotel in Dubai and \$500-a-night rooms at the five-star Taj Mahal in New Delhi and Mumbai.

With more and more Ontarians facing the prospect—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I apologize. I'm trying to listen to a question that's being asked of a minister, and there are continuing conversations going on across the floor. I would encourage you to take those conversations outside, and let's listen to the member from Hamilton East.

Please continue.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Getting on, the last one was \$500-a-night rooms at the five-star Taj Mahal hotels in New Delhi and Mumbai.

With more and more Ontarians facing the prospect of losing their jobs, Premier, tell us what value was derived from this extravagant spending.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of International Trade and Investment.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I can tell you this: The plan for the Ontario government is to be even more aggressive on the world stage and put Ontario out there as a place to invest. I find it very interesting that this member purports to speak on behalf of working people. When he decided to send a letter to my riding with this kind of information, he received a phone call from labour leader Gary Parent, but this particular member decided not to return his call, because what he would have said is that the labour leaders in my own hometown agree that this Ontario government needs to be on the world stage. We need to be out there with our message. We need to attract investment. That is my job and I will continue to do that, and I hope that I do that well.

1120

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Didn't get a letter; didn't hear anything about it. That's news.

Windsor, the Minister of Trade's hometown—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Sorry; thanks for listening.

The Minister of Trade's hometown has the highest unemployment in the country. People are struggling to get by. They can't even dream of staying inside these hotels. We understand some need to travel, but surely a swank \$700-a-night hotel room and a \$60 English breakfast isn't necessary to bring jobs back to Ontario. When so many Windsor people are either unemployed or facing the prospect of losing their jobs, how does this Premier justify the kind of irresponsible spending that this minister is doing?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** Let me just say at the outset that the information that this member wants to present to this House is inaccurate. I have been more than forthcoming with my information about my expenses and I'm happy to offer them to whoever would like to see them.



Let me tell you that in just this past year we have brought in seven applications from international companies that I have met with, who've since applied to our programs and are landing investment in Ontario; that just this year alone we have closed 25 investment deals representing 3,000 jobs and tens of millions of dollars. I appreciate—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I just remind the member from Hamilton East that you had just asked the question. You should have at least had the courtesy to listen to the response.

New question.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Point of order, Mr. Speaker, point of order—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I am not going to recognize the point of order. We've got a custom within this chamber that we do not allow for points of order during question period. If you want to raise a point of order, raise it at the end of question period.

New question.

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I have a question—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I just remind the member—and I'm letting the clock run because, unfortunately, the official opposition will be penalized as well—that we have a practice within this chamber of trying to maintain parliamentary language. You're not helping with comments that you're making like that.

Member from Eglinton–Lawrence.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I have a question for the Minister of Culture and I think it's very opportune today, with the students who are here visiting us in this chamber. My question is about the importance of Black History Month, February.

As you know, every year in February we take time out to honour this incredibly important history in Ontario, the contributions black Ontarians have made to this province going back 200 years. What I would like to ask you is—as we recognize Black History Month, I would like to know some of the specific undertakings that you, as minister, have taken to honour and respect the contributions that black Ontarians have made to this province.

**Hon. M. Aileen Carroll:** I thank my honourable colleague for the question. The government is very proud to honour the significant contributions of Ontario's black community by celebrating Black History Month. Black History Month has given all of us an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of black Ontarians, who are renowned as politicians, athletes, artists and authors throughout this province.

Earlier this month I joined my colleague Bruce Crozier, who is the member from Essex, and together we launched Black History Month at the North American Black Historical Museum in Amherstburg. Our government is marking this occasion through a number

of cultural events across Ontario, and I do encourage all Ontarians to participate in the celebrations as we honour this great community, their people and their achievements.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I'm sure that many members in our constituencies across the province have had Black History Month events take place in our communities.

In my own riding of Eglinton–Lawrence, I was honoured to meet two descendants of slaves who escaped from the United States into Canada and formed the incredible community of North Buxton. They are the curators of the Buxton historical museum. That night in my riding, people came from all over west Toronto to honour these two important people, Shannon and Bryan Prince.

What I would also like to ask is, are we doing anything else to preserve this great history—which we might lose if we don't pay attention to it—and to promote it, especially amongst our young people, who should never forget the lessons to be learned, especially from the 400 years of slavery that were inflicted on innocent people?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister?

**Hon. M. Aileen Carroll:** I thank my honourable colleague, because those kinds of celebrations that took place in his riding this weekend, commemorating two exceptional Ontarians, are exactly the kinds of events that we see happening throughout the province.

We are indeed proud of the heritage and the history, and as a result we have made 18 commemorative plaques, which have been created by the Ontario Heritage Trust. These heritage plaques trace the very perilous path of former black slaves on their journey to freedom through that very famous Underground Railroad. Each one of those plaques tells an inspirational story about some very remarkable people.

While that seems very long ago, today we have President Obama arriving to visit us here in Canada. I cannot think of anybody who can make black Ontarians feel—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## MINISTER'S EXPENSES

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** My question is for the Premier. Premier, in 2004 you were quoted in various media in response to the news that your high-roller seat-mate from Windsor and four of his staff were spending more than \$5,500 a day on a European jaunt that included a \$789 steak lunch. Your quote: "There's an appearance here, which I will assure we avoid in the future." Four and a half years later, we learn that the other minister representing Windsor—we wonder if there's something in the water there—ran up a staggering, taxpayer-paid travel tab of over \$128,000 in just one year.

Premier, were your 2004 assurances to the public, to the taxpayers, just another broken promise?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Premier?

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I will spare my colleague the response coming from the minister herself. She's feeling her oats today; I can tell.

What I will say is that we feel a heavy responsibility, obviously, on a couple of counts. One is to act responsibly when using taxpayer dollars. At the same time, we have a responsibility to get out there and hustle business for Ontario, and there are some costs associated with travel. There are some costs associated with accommodation. There are some costs associated with having meals. That's part and parcel of doing business. Some of the travel takes us to expensive parts of the world, and there are necessarily higher costs there than we might incur here in Ontario, for example.

But my ministers well understand both responsibilities: Get out there and do the best you can to bring jobs home to Ontario, and act responsibly with taxpayer—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** I guess it only takes 20 feet to radically change someone's views on what is appropriate use of taxpayers' dollars.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** —Bacardi rum tour.

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** In 2002, the now Minister Pupatello—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister, you can have that discussion with him following question period. Please continue.

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** In 2002, the now minister criticized the minister of the day for expenses totalling \$103,000 in 48 months—two years. Her comments at the time, and I'm quoting: "Everyone in this House is embarrassed by the fact that you look like you're living a gluttonous lifestyle on the back of the taxpayer."

Premier, are you embarrassed that the same member has spent twice as much in half the time, while many of her constituents are struggling to survive? How can you allow this jet-set lifestyle when jobs are fleeing and families are suffering?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the minister.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** Let me tell you what the difference is. In that previous government, a Toronto minister, who is not the—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Order. Order.

Please continue.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** Here's the difference: We had Minister Jackson, an MPP from Burlington, we all recall, staying in Toronto hotels. That's the difference between us going around the world to sell Ontario for business.

I will not apologize for selling Ontario. It is not a Bacardi rum tour with the chair of the LCBO, as that particular member might remember from his trips abroad. It is hard work, and I will continue to do that for the people of Ontario, especially the people from my hometown.

## MUNICIPALITIES

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Kawartha Lakes staff are forecasting a 10% increase in Ontario Works caseloads. Unemployment there is 8.5% and rising. Ballooning social services costs are straining the city's budget. Property taxes are going up by 3.9%. NDP candidate Lyn Edwards is hearing from hard-hit constituents who face the prospect of losing jobs and paying even higher property taxes.

Minister, a 10-year upload is not going to help recession-weary Kawartha Lakes. Why won't this minister agree right now to cut down the download process to two years from 10 and help struggling municipalities in this province that can't afford to pay for your social services costs?

**Hon. Jim Watson:** I had the pleasure of being in that community yesterday. I had the opportunity to speak to the mayor, who was very appreciative of the efforts of the McGuinty government to invest in municipalities like Kawartha Lakes.

I also had the opportunity to meet the next MPP for that area, Rick Johnson, who's going to be a strong and effective voice for the people of Kawartha Lakes. Unlike the Tory candidate in that riding, Rick Johnson doesn't need a GPS to get around the riding.

Let me just tell you what the good people of Kawartha Lakes have received from the McGuinty government: \$7.1 million from the Investing in Ontario Act; \$656,000 last year in gas tax for transit; rural infrastructure money of \$900,000; and roads and bridges money, last year alone, of \$6 million.

We're proud of our—

**Mr. Mike Colle:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I seek unanimous consent, on behalf of this Legislature and the people of Ontario, to officially welcome President Obama on his visit to Canada and Ontario, and to have an official welcome on behalf of this Legislature to President Obama.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed? I heard a no.

There being no deferred votes today, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1133 to 1300.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### HERITAGE WEEK

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I'm very pleased to acknowledge Heritage Week in Ontario. Everyone recognizes how important heritage is to our culture and our sense of identity. Our understanding of the past is vital. It is through the preservation of our heritage that we maintain our identity and present ourselves to Canada and the world.

Unfortunately, the McGuinty government is failing Ontario on heritage. While the federal government is



spending millions preserving sites from the War of 1812, this government has only given a few thousand dollars. They have no plan to recognize the bicentennial of this seminal event. They seem to have no interest in the history of Ontario and the lives of our ancestors.

They do not care about built heritage either. In 2005, this government gave itself the power to designate heritage buildings at risk. So far they have not designated a single building in Ontario. If this government cares about Ontario's heritage, it needs to start taking action to prove it.

I encourage everyone in Ontario to take part in events marking Heritage Week, and I thank all of the volunteers and staff at our museums, historical sites and community events who work to preserve our heritage all year round.

### GÉRALD "CHUCK" CHARLEBOIS

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** A community's greatest strength is in its people. With the right minds, ideas and dedication, anything is possible. This is certainly true for the city of Cornwall in my riding of Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry. This city has produced many dedicated, creative people who have made a positive difference in their community.

One of those individuals is Gérald Charlebois, known to all of us as "Chuck." Born and raised in the Le Village area of the city, Chuck has worn many hats over the years: local businessman, city councillor and innovator among them. Perhaps his greatest legacy, however, will be with Groupe Renaissance Group. This project, started by Chuck more than a decade ago, has had a hand in at least 350 community renovation and construction projects in Cornwall and throughout the united counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry.

Through every phase of his career, Chuck has made a difference in his community, one that will benefit the people of Cornwall, and in particular Le Village, for decades to come. He has motivated many. He has personally achieved. He has left his mark on so many projects in the community.

After decades of service to his community, Chuck is finally going to get some well-deserved rest in retirement. Just recently, his family and friends joined to wish Chuck the very best for a long and happy retirement. I would like to commend him for his dedication to the community, his creativity, his tenacity, and especially for his friendship. Bon repos, mon ami.

### PESTICIDES

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I urge Mr. McGuinty to rethink his pesticide regulation. We all want a safer Ontario for our children and our environment; however, that's not the goal of this legislation. This legislation and its regulations will affect 20,000 lawn-care professionals, more than 40,000 farm families, and a food and agricultural industry that contributes \$33 billion and employs 700,000. Canada's total \$100-billion forestry and agri-

cultural industries are affected by this. Hospitals, schools and municipalities could better utilize the \$10 million this government is spending on the legislation.

This government calls itself the heart of North America's chemical industry and boasts of the 50,000-plus jobs that this sector creates. Well, you can't have it both ways. You can't say this and then impose unreasonable and unscientific constraints on that very business sector.

Further, farmers need every tool in the toolbox to meet the challenges of feeding a growing population, and that includes safe and effective pesticides. By saying that pesticides are unsafe for urban use, Mr. McGuinty is leaving unwarranted negative impressions on Canadians about food production and the use of pesticides in that production. Why would science-based businesses choose Ontario? This government's lack of scientific criteria makes it impossible to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

### CHILD CARE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Parents in Ontario will be looking to the provincial budget for a significant increase in funding for child care. Yesterday, groups including Campaign 2000 and the Council of Agencies Serving South Asians came to Queen's Park to sound the alarm for child care. As everyone knows, providing families with affordable, licensed child care is a pillar of poverty reduction. While the McGuinty government talks about reducing poverty, people in the know are shaking their heads because they see little action from the Liberal quarter on child care.

There is a child care crisis in Ontario. Major investments are needed immediately to create spaces for 23,000 children who are stuck on waiting lists across our province. The McGuinty Liberals promised \$300 million in new provincial funding but never delivered a dime. They hoarded the provincial dollars and used federal dollars to prop up their underfunded child care strategy. I call that an abdication of responsibility.

The Liberals need to wake up to the fact that affordable child care is good for the economy, good for working people and great for children. With affordable child care, mothers and fathers can take jobs, go to school to upgrade their skills and support their families.

New Democrats have consistently called for a not-for-profit, seamless system that guarantees a universally accessible, affordable program of early learning and care in this province. Ontario is getting a failing grade on child care: in Quebec, \$7 a day; in Ontario, \$70 a day.

I want to thank Jane Mercer, Neethan Shan—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

### FAMILY DAY

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Family Day is an excellent way to provide our hard-working Ontarians with an opportunity to take a little extra time to enjoy the company of their loved ones, and I would like to take this opportunity to



share with everyone the great success of Family Fun Day in Orléans.

In our increasingly busy lives, ensuring that families are provided with opportunities to spend time together is so important. At this event, at least two families that I know had three generations skating together.

That is why I hosted a free skate at the Ray Friel arena in Orléans. It was a great chance to get families out and active together in the community. I must admit it was a great success. We had close to 300 people come out to the free skate, and of course to enjoy my company. To sweeten the deal, we made sure to offer plenty of hot chocolate and cookies for all skaters.

I'm very pleased with the success of our Family Fun Day and look forward to next year. Special thanks to the folks at Ray Friel Centre for helping us set this event up, and to all the families who came out to say hello and take a few laps around the rink.

Ontario Family Day helps to remind us all of the importance of our families and loved ones, and how we all need to take a little bit of time out of our day to appreciate them more. I want to start planning with our community organizations for next year to offer more family fun as we endure these long winters.

#### HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Coming soon to a LHIN near you: Members, is your emergency room next?

On January 27, the Hay Group presented their bombshell report on rural emergency rooms in the Erie St. Clair Local Health Integration Network area. Since that report was made public, the community of Sarnia-Lambton has united in condemning this report. If implemented, the report recommendations would see the emergency rooms at CEE Hospital in Petrolia and the emergency room at the Sydenham hospital in Wallaceburg downgraded to urgent care wards.

It's a bit of a mystery how the Hay Group came up with the recommendations, since there's overwhelming evidence that these two emergency wards are a vital part of the delivery of health care for the residents of central and southern Lambton county.

In Wallaceburg, a community group has formed, called the Save Our Sydenham Committee, which has started a petition that calls for the Hay Group report to be shelved and the emergency room to remain open at Sydenham hospital. I would like to congratulate the residents of Wallaceburg and St. Clair township for organizing this petition drive, and I look forward to assisting them in any way that I can.

LHINs across Ontario are doing studies just like this, and all members should be aware that it won't be long before your rural hospitals are threatened as well. Right now, just in southwestern Ontario there are 27 rural hospitals under the gun. Mr. McGuinty's appointed LHINs need to be told clearly that they should keep their hands off our rural hospitals.

#### SKILLS TRAINING

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** I rise to today thank the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and our government. Last Thursday, Minister John Milloy announced that an additional \$1.8 million will be allocated to Centennial College Ashtonbee campus, located in the riding of Scarborough Southwest. Centennial College will be training more apprentices to meet local demand for workers in the automotive maintenance sector. Through the apprenticeship enhancement fund, the college will modernize training equipment and restructure its facilities so that training will keep pace with the technological changes in automotive maintenance. It will also help the college train more apprentices in general. These upgrades are part of the \$2-billion skills to jobs action plan, which gives Ontarians a competitive edge by training for tomorrow's high-skilled jobs in a greener economy.

1310

I had the opportunity to tour Ashtonbee campus recently and saw first-hand how their training programs lead directly into well-paying jobs in Ontario's workforce. Centennial has partnered with several local businesses in the area, such as Canadian Tire, Volvo/Mack Trucks, General Motors, Ford and other local companies to train their students with the most up-to-date equipment available. The injection of these funds from the provincial government will ensure that the students there are trained with the most modern equipment on the planet.

Finally, there are over 150 trades in the construction, industrial, motive power and service sectors that offer apprenticeship in Ontario. Centennial College is training about 3,000 apprentices per year, and under the leadership of Ann Buller—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

#### INTERNATIONAL MOTHER LANGUAGE DAY

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** This Saturday, February 21 is International Mother Language Day. This date was proclaimed as such by UNESCO in 1999. It aims to celebrate cultural diversity and to promote linguistic and multilingual education and awareness of linguistic and cultural traditions, based on understanding, tolerance and dialogue.

Languages are the most powerful instruments of preserving and developing our tangible and intangible heritage. There are about 7,000 languages spoken in the world, and it is estimated that within a few generations, more than 50% of these languages may disappear due to lack of proper nurturing.

Each year, UNESCO has focused on a particular aspect of language. This year, the launch of the third edition of UNESCO's Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger of Disappearing will form part of the celebrations to be held at UNESCO in Paris.



Ontario is proud to be the home to people from more than 200 different ethnic origins, who speak more than 150 languages. I encourage all Ontarians to embrace and protect their mother language and impart it to the next generation.

Dhannyabad, sagh-olon, supas, zoor-mamnoon, do jeh, dhanyavaad, shukriyaa, xie xie—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

## ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** I rise in the House today to highlight the McGuinty Liberals' continued investments in strengthening Ontario's economy.

Last week, the Minister of Economic Development announced that Ontario is helping an auto parts maker invest in innovative technology that will create 128 jobs in Aurora.

The province is contributing \$2.4 million to support Axiom Group, a supplier for Chrysler, Ford, General Motors and other parts companies. The company plans to develop and produce a new high-output exhaustor for the auto industry. Their new product is manufactured using plastic injection moulding, resulting in a lighter product that also improves air velocity and reduces noise.

The support comes from Ontario's Next Generation of Jobs Fund, a \$1.15-billion incentive program to create and protect jobs for Ontario families. Partnering with business is a component of the Ontario government's five-point plan to grow the economy.

Here's what Perry Rizzo, the president of Axiom Group, said last week: "The support from the McGuinty government helps us to accelerate our growth plans and make the investments in our operations and workforce that allow us to remain competitive. Their support in commercializing our new technology and the skilled and educated workforce anchors our investment in Ontario."

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts regarding universities and management of facilities.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Mr. Hardeman presents the committee's report and moves the adoption of its recommendations. Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** This report comes from the Auditor General's 2007 annual report, containing the recommendations for universities and the management of their facilities. This was the third year in which the Ontario Auditor General conducted the value-for-money audit on the broader public sector organizations. The audit's objective was to assess whether selected univer-

sities had adequate policies and procedures in place to manage and maintain their academic and administrative facilities cost-effectively. We held meetings in May 2008, heard from the universities that were involved in the audit and made 10 recommendations as to how they could better set standards for all universities to utilize their space most cost-effectively.

I think one of the most important recommendations is that the grants to increase facilities are based on the quality of utilization for space within those universities. I think that will provide a better service for all the academic facilities in Ontario.

With that, I move that we adjourn the debate on this motion.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Debate adjourned.*

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### VISUAL FIRE ALARM SYSTEM ACT, 2009

#### LOI DE 2009 SUR LES SYSTÈMES D'ALARME-INCENDIE À AFFICHAGE VISUEL

Mr. Arthurs moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 148, An Act respecting visual fire alarm systems in public buildings / Projet de loi 148, Loi sur les systèmes d'alarme-incendie à affichage visuel dans les édifices publics.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** This bill, if enacted, would provide a visual notice in addition to the standard audio signal that a fire alarm has been activated. This visual notice would give those who are deaf or hard of hearing the necessary warning to exit those buildings quickly and safely. I look forward to the opportunity, at second reading, of hearing from the House on this bill.

### INACTIVE CEMETERIES PROTECTION ACT, 2009

#### LOI DE 2009 SUR LA PROTECTION DES CIMETIÈRES INACTIFS

Mr. Brownell moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 149, An Act to protect Ontario's inactive cemeteries / Projet de loi 149, Loi visant à protéger les cimetières inactifs de l'Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** This bill, if enacted, will protect our inactive cemeteries. The bill will help to preserve the sanctity of our deceased, safeguard our history and heritage and provide clear guidelines to those looking to develop near or on our province's gravesites. It is of public interest that our cemeteries be preserved and maintained in their original locations.

#### 1173931 ONTARIO LIMITED ACT, 2009

Mr. Rinaldi moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill Pr21, An Act to revive 1173931 Ontario Limited.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Pursuant to standing order 86, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

1320

### MOTIONS

#### COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion regarding standing committees' memberships.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed? Agreed. Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I move that the following changes be made to the membership of the following committees: on the Standing Committee on Estimates, Mr. Craitor and Mr. Rinaldi be replaced by Mr. Flynn and Mr. Naqvi; on the Standing Committee on Justice Policy, Mr. Naqvi be replaced by Mr. Levac; on the Standing Committee on Government Agencies, Mr. Flynn be replaced by Mr. Rinaldi; on the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills, Mr. Craitor be replaced by Mr. Naqvi; on the Standing Committee on Social Policy, Mr. Levac be replaced by Mr. Craitor and Ms. Scott be replaced by Mrs. Witmer.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

### PETITIONS

#### NON-PROFIT HOUSING

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas every citizen of Ontario should have a safe, healthy and decent home; and

"Whereas the province of Ontario recognizes in its poverty reduction strategy that affordable housing is

'extremely important for ensuring the stability and well-being of Ontario's families'; and

"Whereas thousands of individuals and families are denied this basic right when in 2001 the province of Ontario downloaded affordable housing to the city of Toronto but refused to pay for the hundreds of millions of dollars in deferred capital repairs; and

"Whereas poor living conditions undermine the safety and security of communities, harming children, youth, seniors and families living in affordable homes; and

"Whereas poor living conditions have a damaging impact on the health of communities, costing Ontarians millions in health costs; and

"Whereas investment in housing pays off in better residences and in stronger, safer, healthier communities; and

"Whereas investment in housing in maintaining a state of good repair strengthens our economy by creating employment opportunities; and

"Whereas residents of Toronto Community Housing have waited five years for the province to pay its bills in full and bring affordable housing to a state of good repair;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

"Accept its responsibility and" immediately "invest \$300 million to ensure that all residents of Toronto Community Housing have a safe, decent, healthy home."

I'm in complete agreement with this. I'm going to affix my signature hereto and give it to legislative page Ashton to take.

### CHILD CUSTODY

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the people of Ontario, deserve and have the right to request an amendment to the Children's Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their parents and grandparents.

"Whereas subsection 20(2.1) requires parents and others with custody of children to refrain from unreasonably placing obstacles to personal relations between the children and their grandparents; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2) contains a list of matters that a court must consider when determining the best interests of a child. The bill amends that subsection to include a specific reference to the importance of maintaining emotional ties between children and grandparents; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2.1) requires a court that is considering custody of or access to a child to give effect to the principle that a child should have as much contact with each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2.2) requires a court that is considering custody of a child to take into consideration each applicant's willingness to facilitate as much contact



between the child and each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child;

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Children's Law Reform Act, as above, to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their parents and grandparents."

As I agree with this petition, I'll affix my signature and send it to the clerks' table.

### MOTORCYCLE SAFETY

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I have here a petition signed by a great number of my constituents and constituents in neighbouring ridings. It was brought to my office by Jim Seeds from Commissioner Street in Embro. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas to impose a total ban on an activity or sport under the guise of protecting the public from injury as presented by MPP Helena Jaczek in Bill 117 to amend the Highway Traffic Act section 38.1, 'No person shall drive or operate a motorcycle on a highway if another person under the age of 14 years is a passenger on the motorcycle,' would be an injustice to us, the people of Ontario; and

"Whereas the restrictive aspects of this proposal far outweigh the minor risks associated and confirmed by the annual Ministry of Transportation statistical safety reports, and further, there is no clear distinction that 'motorcycle-related injuries' apply to Ontario streets or highways, as stated in defence of Bill 117;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Request that Bill 117 be rejected and not become law."

Thank you very much for allowing me to present this petition.

### FIREARMS CONTROL

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** I have a petition which is in support of—unlawful firearms in vehicles. It's Bill 56, and actually it has to do with our very esteemed colleague Mr. Mike Colle.

"Whereas the growing number of unlawful firearms in motor vehicles is threatening innocent citizens and our police officers;

"Whereas police officers, military personnel and lawfully licensed persons are the only people allowed to possess firearms; and

"Whereas a growing number of unlawful firearms are transported, smuggled and being found in motor vehicles; and

"Whereas impounding motor vehicles and suspending driver's licences of persons possessing unlawful firearms would aid the police in their efforts to make our streets safer;

"We, the undersigned citizens, strongly request and petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 56, entitled the Unlawful Firearms in Vehicles Act, 2008, into law, so that we can reduce the number of crimes involving unlawful firearms in our communities."

Since I agree, I'm delighted to sign this petition.

### HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care should recognize the importance of rural health care in Ontario; and

"Whereas the Erie St. Clair Local Health Integration Network has commissioned a report by the Hay Group that recommends the downgrading of the emergency room at the Charlotte Eleanor Englehart (CEE) Hospital in Petrolia" and in Sydenham hospital in Wallaceburg...; and

"Whereas, if accepted, that recommendation would increase the demand on emergency room services in Sarnia" and Chatham; and

"Whereas, as of today, many patients are already redirected to the Petrolia emergency room for medical care; and

"Whereas the Petrolia medical community has stated that the loss of the Petrolia emergency room will result in the loss of many of our local doctors; and

"Whereas the Petrolia retirement and nursing home communities are dependent on" this hospital;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to urge the Erie St. Clair Local Health Integration Network to completely reject the report of the Hay Group and leave the emergency room designation at Charlotte Eleanor Englehart Hospital in Petrolia" and Wallaceburg hospital.

### POPE JOHN PAUL II

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** I have a petition that's addressed to the Parliament of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the legacy of Pope John Paul II reflects his lifelong commitment to international understanding, peace and the defence of equality and human rights;

"Whereas his legacy has an all-embracing meaning that is particularly relevant to Canada's multi-faith and multicultural traditions;

"Whereas, as one of the great spiritual leaders of contemporary times, Pope John Paul II visited Ontario during his pontificate of more than 25 years and, on his visits, was enthusiastically greeted by Ontario's diverse religious and cultural communities;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to grant speedy passage into law of the private member's bill by Oak Ridges MPP Frank Klees entitled An Act to proclaim Pope John Paul II Day."

I agree with the petition and affix my signature to it.

## ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I have a petition presented to my by Teresa De Wetering concerning the safety net payments for beginning and expanding farmers.

"Whereas the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Honourable Leona Dombrowsky, has publicly stated that she 'absolutely' wants to help the beginning and new entrants to agriculture; and

"Whereas beginning and expanding farmers are going to be important in the coming decade, as a record number of producers are expected to leave the industry; and

"Whereas the safety net payments—i.e., Ontario cattle, hog and horticulture payments (OCHHP)—are based on historical averages, and many beginning and expanding farmers were not in business or just starting up in the period so named and thus do not have reflective historic allowable net sales; and

"Whereas beginning and expanding producers are likely at the greatest risk of being financially disadvantaged by poor market conditions and being forced to exit agriculture because there is not a satisfactory safety net program or payment that meets their needs;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately adjust the safety net payments made via the OCHHP to include beginning and expanding farmers, and make a relief payment to the beginning and expanding farmers who have been missed or received seriously disproportionate payments, thereby preventing beginning farmers from exiting the agriculture sector."

I affix my signature, Mr. Speaker, and thank you very much for the opportunity to present it here today.

1330

## TOM LONGBOAT

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I have a petition here asking this Legislature to recognize June 4 every year as Tom Longboat Day in the province of Ontario.

"Whereas Tom Longboat, a proud son of the Onondaga Nation, was one of the most internationally celebrated athletes in Canadian history;

"Whereas Tom Longboat was voted as the number one Canadian athlete of the 20th century by Maclean's magazine for his record-breaking marathon and long-distance triumphs against the world's best;

"Whereas Tom Longboat fought for his country in World War I and was wounded twice during his tour of duty;

"Whereas Tom Longboat is a proud symbol of the outstanding achievements and contributions of Canada's aboriginal people;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to recognize June 4 as Tom Longboat Day in Ontario."

I affix my name to this petition, along with thousands of other Ontarians who support this.

## POPE JOHN PAUL II

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** I have a number of more pages regarding a petition here that I can submit at this time, since we will probably be debating this later on today. It's a petition to the Parliament of Ontario, and it reads:

"Whereas the legacy of Pope John Paul II reflects his lifelong commitment to international understanding, peace and the defence of equality and human rights;

"Whereas his legacy has an all-embracing meaning that is particularly relevant to Canada's multi-faith and multicultural traditions;

"Whereas, as one of the great spiritual leaders of contemporary times, Pope John Paul II visited Ontario during his pontificate of more than 25 years and, on his visits, was enthusiastically greeted by Ontario's diverse religious and cultural communities;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to grant speedy passage into law of the private member's bill by Oak Ridges MPP Frank Klees entitled An Act to proclaim Pope John Paul II Day."

I affix my signature to it and agree with it.

## JUSTICE SYSTEM

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** I have a petition which is addressed to the Attorney General and the Parliament of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the Canadian Judicial Council has been asked by Ontario's Attorney General to probe the judicial behaviour of judges;

"Whereas judges are human beings and have been known to make serious mistakes in the judicial system, leading to devastating consequences and unfair justice for Canadian citizens;

"Whereas some judges are known to have fallen asleep in the midst of a trial and have admitted to making serious errors of judgment;

"Whereas some judges have been observed making biased, disrespectful comments and abusing their judicial powers;

"Whereas Canadian families need to be protected from these judges who are unable to change their habits, unable to follow the rule of proper conduct, unable to exercise recommendations set by the Court of Appeal, and consequently commit grave injustices;

"Therefore we, the undersigned citizens, are strongly requesting the following changes in our judicial system:

"(1) That a 'judicial demerit point system' be applied to ensure that judges are accountable for their judgments rendered; and

"(2) That a yearly review of their performance be established."

I'm delighted to send this to you and I'm happy to sign it as well.



## BATHURST HEIGHTS ADULT LEARNING CENTRE

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I have a petition from the good people at the Bathurst Heights Adult Learning Centre and the director, Walter Faione.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there are over 2,000 adult ESL students being served by the Bathurst Heights Adult Learning Centre, operated by the Toronto District School Board in partnership with the province of Ontario; and

"Whereas this is the only English-as-a-second-language ... learning centre in this area of the city located directly on the Spadina subway line, making it accessible for students across the city; and

"Whereas newcomers in Toronto, and in the Lawrence Heights area, need the Bathurst Heights Adult Learning Centre so they can succeed in their career opportunities; and

"Whereas the proposed revitalization of Lawrence Heights threatens the existence of the centre;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, demand that any revitalization of Lawrence Heights include a newcomer centre and ensure that the Bathurst Heights centre continues to exist in the present location."

I support this, along with thousands of students at the Bathurst Heights centre.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

### POPE JOHN PAUL II DAY ACT, 2009

#### LOI DE 2009 SUR LE JOUR DU PAPE JEAN-PAUL II

Mr. Klees moved second reading of the following bill:  
Bill 25, An Act to proclaim Pope John Paul II Day /  
Projet de loi 25, Loi proclamant le Jour du Pape Jean-Paul II.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The bill for which I have just moved second reading will designate April 2 as Pope John Paul II Day in Ontario. By passing this bill into law, this House would not only honour the man who served as spiritual leader to millions in this province and around the world, but would also ensure that the values of compassion, respect and tolerance—values personified throughout the life of John Paul II—are contemplated and celebrated by the citizens of this province.

Since presenting this bill for first reading on April 2, 2007, which was the second anniversary of Pope John Paul's death, the public response to it has been, quite literally, overwhelming. My office received 5,000 signatures on petitions in support of this bill in one day

alone, and I know that other members have also received literally thousands of signatures on petitions of support for its passage by this House. Of interest is the fact that many petitions came from non-Catholics, and I believe that this in itself is evidence that people of all faiths recognize the impact of Pope John Paul and that his influence surpassed denominational borders.

Some of the most interesting responses have come when people find out that I, as the sponsor of this bill, am not Roman Catholic—or Polish, for that matter. In fact, I'm a German-born Protestant who studied theology in a Baptist seminary. But like many others, I have been touched and influenced over the years by the life and example of a man who, while carrying out his responsibilities as spiritual leader of millions around the world, never tired of advocating for social justice and human rights at every opportunity. And he had a way of making what he said transcend the ecclesiastical trappings and ceremony that all too often can get in the way of the message.

I was always intrigued by this man, who came from humble beginnings in his native Poland to become the first Polish pope and the first non-Italian pope since the 1500s. One of only four people to be named to Time magazine's 100 most influential people for both the 20th and the 21st centuries, Pope John Paul demonstrated a rare combination of courage and compassion: never afraid to speak the truth, yet always sensitive to and respectful of the historical, cultural and religious differences that exist in our diverse world.

I enjoyed watching and listening to him address massive crowds in various countries around the world, and was always taken by the ease with which he could move from encouraging and inspiring people from all walks of life, young and old, with his spiritual teaching, to chastising the powerful for neglecting the poor and offending the defenceless.

But it wasn't until I read this book, entitled *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, that I gained insight into the deep sense of humility and generosity with which Pope John Paul accepted and exercised his responsibility of leadership. The book came about as a result of a planned one-on-one interview that was to be televised by the major networks around the world. Vittorio Messori, a journalist and writer, had been chosen to conduct the interview and was given the latitude to develop his own questions, which he then sent to the Vatican in preparation for the interview. But the interview had to be cancelled due to scheduling conflicts.

A few months later, the pope sent the following message to Mr. Messori: "Even if there wasn't a way to respond to you in person, I kept your questions on my desk. They interested me. I didn't think it would be wise to let them go to waste. So I thought about them and, after some time, during the brief moments when I was free from obligations, I responded to them in writing. You have asked me questions; therefore you have a right to responses.... I am working on them. I will let you have them. Then you do with them what you think is appropriate."



Well, work on them he did, and the result was this book, right down to the title, which he himself put on the cover of the folder containing his manuscript. I want to read some selected passages that I believe give an insight into not only the principles and values that this pope taught and lived but reveal his heart for people of all races, cultures and religions.

The very first question was a bold one: "Haven't you ever had questions and problems (as is human) about the truth of this creed?" The response is a telling exposure of the character of a man who at this point, let's be reminded, had been pope for 16 years, when he said: "Your question is infused with both a lively faith and certain anxiety. I state right from the outset, Be not afraid."

He goes on to explain that we should not be afraid to face our questions and doubts, but that we should look to our faith for the confidence to deal with them. But he points out that he began his first message as Pope with those very words, "Be not afraid," and that they apply to him as profoundly as to anyone else.

1340

In response to a question about why God has allowed so many religions to exist, John Paul gives this response: "Instead of marvelling at the fact that Providence allows such a great variety of religions, we should be amazed at the number of common elements found within them." His respect for those other religions is revealed in these words when he wrote, "The religions of the Far East have contributed greatly to the history of morality and culture, forming a rational identity in the Chinese, Indian, Japanese and Tibetans and also in the peoples of Southeast Asia and the archipelagos of the Pacific Ocean."

John Paul had a very close contact with the Jewish community in Krakow, where he was engaged in pastoral work as a young priest. He did not lose that contact when he became Pope. In fact, he had this to say about those ties: "On my pastoral journeys around the world, I always try to meet representatives of the Jewish community. But a truly exceptional experience for me was certainly my visit to the synagogue of Rome. The history of the Jews in Rome is a unique chapter in the history of the Jewish people, a chapter closely linked for that matter to the acts of the apostles. During that memorable visit, I spoke of the Jews as our elder brothers in the faith."

This inclusive spirit seemed innate, as illustrated by but this one example. When he was a parish priest during the Second World War, a young Jewish child was brought to his safekeeping in the hope that the child's parents, who had disappeared, would eventually come and reclaim him. After several months, a number of parishioners came to him to suggest that since the child's parents might be dead, he should go ahead and baptize that child. But on this, Father Karol remained firm. He said "No, because the parents might still be alive and might still come back for him"—and come back for their child they did at the end of the war.

His respect for those who practise the Islamic religion is evident in these words: "The religiosity of Muslims

deserves respect. It is impossible not to admire, for example, their fidelity to prayer. The image of believers in Allah who, without caring about time or place, fall to their knees and immerse themselves in prayer remains a model for those who invoke the true God, in particular for those Christians who, having deserted their magnificent cathedrals, pray only a little or not at all."

For John Paul II, diversity in faith and culture were not points resulting in human conflict. Rather, they were particular expressions of human uniqueness and individuality that give added meaning and beauty to social relationships.

The international religious/cultural variety that is the human family is something that John Paul loved to surround himself with and joyously celebrate on his more than 100 trips around the world and in his many audiences and talks with people of all backgrounds. Pope John Paul II attended the yearly ecumenical meetings at Assisi, the town of the great peacemaker St. Francis, where he encouraged interreligious dialogue and where he prayed with people of all faith backgrounds. His strong and long-term relationships with people of other traditions also led to his being esteemed on an international scale.

In keeping with one of his papal titles, Pontifex Maximus, which literally means "master bridge-builder," he attempted to remove divisions created throughout history. He likewise sought to redress the historical wrongs and injustices committed in the past in former religious conflicts. On behalf of the Catholic church, he asked for forgiveness for those wrongs, and was the first Pope to pray at monuments dedicated to Protestant martyrs killed by Catholics.

During his pontificate, the Pope travelled to more than 100 countries, more than any of his predecessors. In 1984, he visited Ontario as part of his Canada-wide tour, where on September 15 he went to the fort of Sainte-Marie-among-the-Hurons and Martyrs' Shrine in Midland. At that point, pointing towards the sky, he told his hosts that he would ask his superior if he could come back one day to be a tour guide during the summer in this magnificent place. Later that day, the Pope travelled to York region, where he consecrated the Slovak Catholic Cathedral of the Transfiguration in Markham, making it the only place of worship blessed by the Pope in North America.

In 2002, the Pope again came to Ontario to take part in World Youth Day, which involved thousands of young pilgrims who arrived here from every corner of the globe, representing many religions and nationalities. In February 2004 he was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for helping to reshape the world.

I submit to all members of this House today that Pope John Paul the Great, as he is rightly called, embodied the values and principles of our multi-faith, multicultural society, which are truly Canadian values. As a result of his special relationship with our province, he is also truly Ontario's Pope. At the same time, he reaches out to us all and invites us to look beyond the robes and ecclesial



titles to his basic message of mutual respect and understanding, love and appreciation, peace and harmony. His words of encouragement are particularly relevant today as our province and our country—indeed, the world—face unprecedented challenges: “Be not afraid.”

I ask all members of this House—Catholic, Jewish, Eastern Orthodox, Muslim, Hindu, Protestant and of no religious tradition—to join me today in unanimously acclaiming Pope John Paul II Day in the province of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's my honour to speak at such an auspicious occasion. I want to, first of all, acknowledge that we have many prestigious members from our Polish community in the members' gallery, in particular, former parliamentarian Mr. Jesse Flis; Jesse, stand—

*Applause.*

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** So, welcome. Jesse is now sitting on the board of directors at Copernicus Lodge, which is a wonderful institution in my riding.

It's fascinating that it is so rare that we acknowledge spiritual giants. It's so rare that we set aside the time, we set aside the place, we set aside a law to acknowledge a day—and that's all we are asking for here: a day, simply a day to remember this incredible man. One of the things one could say about His Holiness Pope John Paul II is that he was a humble man, but we'll try to laud him in the way that a humble man would want.

I want to focus on what he did to combat totalitarianism. I'd like to focus on the role that he played in those incredible events that ended up in the crumbling of the Berlin Wall. I knew a young Polish woman in my own congregation in Parkdale—High Park who sought refuge many times during those great uprisings of solidarity and the movement to free Poland. She said the Church was there like a beacon. It's interesting to even say that because I've also been on the Avi Lewis show and I've been in many debates with the likes of Richard Dawkins, people I would like to call fundamentalist atheists, who think that the world's sins should be placed at the feet of organized religion. We very rarely turn around to them and to the world at large and say, “And also, perhaps even more so, the world's greatest acts of justice.”

Here was a great act of justice. In the words of Lech Walesa, the founder of the Solidarity movement: “Before his pontificate, the world was divided into blocs. Nobody knew how to get rid of communism.” Pope John Paul II simply said: “Do not be afraid, change the image of this land.”

Again, Lech said: “The Pope started this chain of events that led to the end of communism.” That is what this one man did. One cannot overstate that enough. This is a phenomenal act. Because of him, every church in Poland became a beacon of freedom and a sanctuary, a true sanctuary not only for Roman Catholics but for all of those who sought justice, all of those who sought liberty

and all of those who sought democracy. This is an incredible role for a religious institution.

1350

As my dear friend Mr. Klees said, I'm not a Roman Catholic, although I have many Roman Catholics in my family and I actually named my children after saints. I have a Francesca and a Damien, and those who will know know that Father Damien and of course St. Francis—actually, I went to the Vatican just this last year and got a medal of St. Francis blessed by the current Pope.

We are all one family under God, and nobody knew that better than His Holiness Pope John Paul II. I can think of few others in the 20th or the 21st centuries who really are those spiritual giants. I think of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. I think of Oscar Romero, shot in the back while performing mass in El Salvador. I think of Mother Teresa and the work that she did. There are so few. I think of His Holiness the Dalai Lama—and I've stood many times in this House on behalf of the Tibetan community—and think of the work that he does, which in a sense is really the continuation of the work of Pope John Paul II, in his struggle against a new form of totalitarianism, Chinese Communism. So here we have these spiritual giants who stand up to those who would step upon the throat of liberty, democracy and freedom, and they do it because their faith calls them to do it.

I think of Pope John Paul II coming to Roncesvalles on World Youth Day and the joy and exuberance of our community at that. Those of Polish descent and those who simply believe in liberty and freedom came from miles around, simply to acknowledge that he was there. I went into a Polish restaurant not long ago on Roncesvalles and sat down on a chair. The owner came up to me and said, “Do you know what chair you're sitting in? It's the same chair that His Holiness Pope John Paul II sat in when he was here.” He went into a local restaurant and simply ordered some food.

This was a humble man. This was a giving man. This was the first Pope to ever visit a mosque. That in itself is a phenomenal act. He was a Pope who stood up against the war in Iraq when it was unpopular to do so. He stood in the face of incredible pressure against the joint forces of the United States and Great Britain and said, “No, this war is unjust. It shouldn't happen,” and of course, much too little and much too late, the world is coming around to the point of view he had from the very beginning about that.

The fall of the Berlin Wall was this phenomenal moment in the lives of all who sit in this chamber, because had we thought that it could happen 10 years before it did, someone would have called us crazy. At that point, we were on the brink of a nuclear war. We couldn't believe that this massive behemoth, the Soviet Union, could come crashing down, really, in a sense, without a shot fired on that day. But what we didn't see is what His Holiness did see from the very beginning: that it was the result of many, many years of grassroots organizing, of incredible courage, of people who stood up, who went to



prison, who congregated in the few safe places they could in the former countries of the Soviet Union, who defied the authorities and who stood for freedom. It also was an incredible testament to what he stood for and what other great spiritual giants have stood for, which is pacifism, non-violent resistance. Non-violently, this man undid the work of much violence. Non-violently, he undid one of the largest totalitarian states the world has ever seen. Non-violently, he made that happen, and he would be the first to acknowledge he was one among hundreds of thousands. We look to those lights, we look to those spiritual giants, and we pray—I certainly do—along with the Tibetans that the same thing happens for the Tibetans, that the same thing happens with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, that their own non-violent struggle has the same result.

This is a miracle. He wrought a miracle. I certainly believe that we should always acknowledge those who bring about miracles of peace, miracles of liberty, miracles of democracy, in our lives.

The Pope, when he received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, said, "May the desire for freedom, peace, a more humane world symbolized by this medal inspire men and women of goodwill in every time and place...."

"Warsaw, Moscow, Budapest, Berlin, Prague, Sofia and Bucharest have become stages in a long pilgrimage toward liberty. It is admirable that in these events, entire peoples spoke out—women, young people, men, overcoming fears, their irrepressible thirst for liberty speeded up developments, made walls tumble down and opened gates."

That incredible sentiment, that act of great faith, which I hope we all share in this House, in the sense that we are all here, I think, called by a faith, whether we have an organized religion we attend or not—a great faith that there is hope that the world can be changed, that there is no insurmountable problem, that everything we see that needs to be done can be done, that walls can tumble down, that totalitarian regimes can end, that the poor can be fed, that we can overcome, as His Holiness wanted us to do, these incredible sins of poverty and homelessness and hunger and war. You know, it's not a pipe dream. It's no more a pipe dream than it was years before the Berlin Wall fell—to think that that was possible. It is no pipe dream. In fact, if anything is a pipe dream, it's that things will continue the way they are forever. The real sense of unreality is that we'll go forward and not feed the hungry and not house the homeless and not reach some kind of peace without war. That won't happen. The world, the planet itself, can't let it happen.

But Pope John Paul II, as others have before him, and as we all pray others will after him, stood for the other way: the way of peace, the way of homes, the way of feeding the hungry, the way of extending one's arms to those who are not of one's faith, extending one's arms to those who don't agree with you. That's what he stood for.

In doing so, he fomented nothing short of a worldwide revolution, and it's a revolution that was successful. So

the very least we can do, I think, in the light of all that he did and all that was done through him as a symbol by ordinary men and women—men and women who served time in concentration camps and jails, abandoned by everyone they knew, in the face of all opposition, estranged from those they loved—is to remember that change costs. He stood for them and he would want to dedicate, I'm sure, the day to them, to all of them—not just to those of the Roman Catholic faith but to those of all faiths, even those with simply the faith in change.

So I absolutely support this bill. I think we all should. It's the least we can do. It's an absolute joy and pleasure and privilege again to stand in support of it, and of course in support of the revolution he started that still hasn't seen the world change the way he would have wanted it to but which, because of him, definitely will one day. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you very much. I just want to remind honourable members to keep your BlackBerries away from the open microphones. It does play havoc with the translators' headsets and their ears.

Further debate?

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I'm pleased to add to the discussion of this private member's bill in this House. This allows me to bring forward the voice of those constituents of York South-Weston who have expressed through petitions that I have presented in this Legislature their support for this bill.

Pope John Paul II's charismatic personality transcended the boundaries of the Catholic faith. He successfully engaged in a dialogue with representatives of other world religions, many of whom he invited several times to pray with him for world peace, convening them to the Vatican, and often to the medieval town of Assisi, famous as the birthplace of St. Francis, as Mr. Klees mentioned.

1400

Pope Wojtyła travelled tirelessly all over the globe advocating for co-operation and peace among the diverse people of the world. He was the first non-Italian Pope. He was extremely loved, not only by the Polish people and the Italian people but by people from all over the world. He was the most travelled Pope in history and took his message to 129 countries in 104 trips outside Italy. He surprised and pleased millions by communicating with them in their own languages.

At times, he used the world as a pulpit: in Africa, to decry hunger; in Hiroshima, Japan, to denounce the arms race. But whether at home or abroad, he was a great proponent of human rights and world peace. His example assumes particular significance in our country, and in particular in our province, where so many cultures, religions and traditions come together as one. It is fitting to proclaim a day in Ontario that recognizes Pope John Paul II's legacy of promoting dialogue, co-operation and understanding among different cultures.

From a personal point of view, and as a former broadcast journalist, I had the opportunity to follow Pope



John Paul II's first visit to Toronto during his cross-Canada tour in 1984. I still remember vividly the enthusiasm of the enormous crowd that came to greet him at Ontario Place. The pontiff responded to their joy, smiling radiantly upon them throughout the whole evening.

Ontario Place was again the meeting place where the celebrations for World Youth Day 2002 began. World Youth Day, which started in 1984 and takes place in a different country every three years, brings together young people from every corner of the earth. In what was Pope Wojtyla's final visit to Canada, 750,000 young people arrived here from all over the world, answering his call to unite in brotherhood, solidarity and peace. Scores of young people were welcomed in Canadian families. Some slept in school gyms, others in public buildings. During the day they filled our streets, carrying knapsacks and waving flags, singing praise to this aging religious man, who in their eyes had the status of a rock star. It was truly a moving experience to interview many of them. Their enthusiasm, their joy and goodwill were infectious and filled my heart with hope.

World Youth Day also featured Toronto on the world stage, and this made the city a destination for other religious festivals and conferences. As a field producer and television anchor, I was in Rome in 1999 when Pope John Paul II, in an historic ceremony, declared the beatification of Padre Pio, the popular Franciscan brother and priest, later proclaimed saint.

As chance would have it, I was in Rome that fateful day, April 2, 2005, when Pope Wojtyla died. The Eternal City literally came to a standstill. Since the news of his death became public, there was a palpable feeling of mourning, sadness, loss. Between April 2 and April 8, the day of the funeral, more than three million pilgrims came to Rome to pay homage to this extraordinary spiritual leader. While thousands of people waited up to 24 hours to enter St. Peter's Basilica, a surreal silence fell upon the centre of the usually bustling Italian capital. The streets were nearly deserted. Very few people ventured out, and traffic was nearly non-existent. Families gathered inside their homes. Even children's playgrounds were quiet and empty. At this historic junction, I really felt that the world had suffered a great loss.

In memory of Pope John Paul II and as a tribute to his great contribution, my honourable colleague from Newmarket–Aurora proposes that April 2, the day on which Pope Wojtyla died, be declared Pope John Paul II Day in the province of Ontario. I join him in honouring the legacy of this remarkable world spiritual leader.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I feel honoured and humbled to stand in support of designating April 2 as Pope John Paul II Day in Canada's most diverse, populous province, our great province of Ontario.

Let me say this about the three colleagues who spoke before me. It is extremely humbling. Mr. Klees, from Newmarket–Aurora, who put forward this resolution, is, I

think, the model MPP in terms of outreach from this chamber. Whether it is a religious group, whether it is an ethnic group, he has made significant overtures to every Ontarian. I am very proud of him, and today he ought to be congratulated for bringing this forward.

My good friend from Parkdale–High Park, a minister, was able to speak spiritually today, and very powerfully, and I want to congratulate her for that. I thought your words were quite remarkable, and they came from the heart, which was wonderful.

My colleague from York South–Weston, you did a remarkable job cataloguing to this chamber for history, forever, in Hansard, your feelings when Pope John Paul II came to Canada and specifically to our province of Ontario and to your city in Toronto, and also how you felt the day that this great spiritual leader died.

I know, in my young life, that Pope John Paul II will always be remembered for helping to end the oppression of the Iron Curtain in a very passive and moral way, in a way that my generation can only thank him for because we have never known Communism quite to the extent that many in this chamber had seen. I want to again congratulate Mr. Klees, because this is a very important resolution.

We should focus on the resolution at hand. Designating April 2 as Pope John Paul II Day will be something that most Ontarians, once they find out about it, will be overjoyed about.

I support this resolution. I can say, like Mr. Klees and like Ms. DiNovo, that I'm not a Catholic; I'm also not Polish. I think most people here can tell that I'm a Scottish Presbyterian, especially during question period; at least, my husband will tell you that. I'm quite a fiery character, as you all know. I come by those roots quite honestly. But I did go to a Catholic university, St. Francis Xavier University in Nova Scotia. My mother, of course, was a Catholic. I have, just like my colleague from Parkdale–High Park, a lot of family who are still practising Catholics.

I know that we have here several members from the Catholic community and the Polish community in Ontario. I want to welcome you. This must be a very joyous day, a very important day that recognizes somebody who was not only a spiritual giant to you but also a real role model, particularly for those from the Polish community—to see somebody, the first non-Italian Pope, succeed the way he did. I'm really proud of that and to be part of this.

I would like to quote the Grand Knight of the Knights of Columbus—I beg everyone's pardon in trying to pronounce the name properly—Włodzimierz Buzny. He sent a note to my colleague Frank Klees, and it said, “the legacy of Pope John Paul II, reflecting his lifelong pledge to international understanding of peace, and promotion of equality among different faiths and cultures. The former Pope's legacy has an all-embracing meaning that is particularly pertinent to Canada's diverse religious and cultural communities.” Grand Knight Buzny's comments lend the necessary reason to why this chamber should designate April 2 as Pope John Paul II Day.



As Mr. Klees points out in one of his backgrounders with this press release, "Over the years, the Legislature has designated certain days to commemorate significant events in the province or to recognize individuals, organizations and cultural groups for their contributions to the province of Ontario, its heritage and quality of life. Pope John Paul II's legacy reflects a lifelong commitment to international understanding, peace, and the defence and promotion of equality and human rights. Equally important is his consistent demonstration of respect for people of all faiths and cultures. That legacy is particularly relevant to Ontario's multi-faith and multicultural traditions and present-day experience."

Mr. Klees made a statement during his presentation and he included a quote from Pope John Paul II, who discussed in his book—or part of the transcripts—different religions. His quote was, "We should be amazed at the common elements." I know that every member of this chamber, particularly those of us who have diverse ridings, understands that there are so many commonalities among us. We are, after all, mothers and daughters and brothers and sisters and fathers, and we all share the same concerns in this daily life in Canada, which are paying the bills, and making sure the lights are on and that the kids are off to school on time. At the end of the day, as my colleague from Parkdale-High Park says, we are all one family under God.

1410

I know that many members of this chamber received petitions, and I was happy to see that today, although this resolution was brought forward through the official opposition and my colleague in the Progressive Conservative Party, many members from the Liberal Party and the New Democrats also read into the record appeals from everyday Ontarians to make this day a reality.

I would like to add for the record one more time a portion of that petition. Ontarians have said: "The legacy of the late Pope John Paul II reflects his lifelong commitment to international understanding, peace and the defence of equality and human rights. On his two visits to Ontario in 1984 and 2002, he was greeted enthusiastically by Ontario's diverse religious and cultural communities. During the 2002 World Youth Day in Toronto (designed by Pope John Paul II himself, to bring joy and hope to the world's youth) 800,000-1,000,000 people welcomed him warmly, demonstrating their widespread respect and support.

"The passage of this bill would be important for several reasons. First, there's a need to remind people about Pope John Paul II's life, who exemplified values that are essential to good living and human happiness. His example of courage, forgiveness and how to die with dignity in great suffering are virtues more people should know about. Second, the day would also strengthen and encourage respect for our multi-faith and multicultural traditions—both prominent values during his life and pontificate. Third, a special day would show respect to a great man credited with many outstanding accomplish-

ments, among them the downfall of communism in Eastern Europe."

I think that is quite significant, and among those folks, those ordinary Ontarians, of course all three major political parties in the province, not only did the Grand Knight of the Knights of Columbus endorse this bill, but Mr. Klees was also able to gain the very important support of the Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops and its president, the Most Reverend James Matthew Wingle, Bishop of St. Catharines, who stated: "On the second anniversary of his death, we remember the outstanding witness of the life of Pope John Paul II. People of all faiths, and those with no specific religious ties, cherish his memory as one who brought the whole human family a voice of hope and a lifelong message of peace. His noble legacy lives on as he continues to be remembered as one of the great leaders of our time." Mr. Klees also received an endorsement from the Most Reverend Thomas Collins, Archbishop of Toronto, who stated, "I am pleased to see that the memory and extensive contributions of Pope John Paul II continue to be recognized by people of all faiths."

As I close, I would like to say that in a province this culturally, religiously and, in fact, economically diverse, grouped into rural, suburban and urban, it's important that we find elements, particularly in this chamber, that unite us. I believe Mr. Klees's bill has done that, and I think it's important today that we show not only him and not only the Polish community and not only the Catholic community, but all Ontarians a show of unification today and support this piece of legislation. I think it's something we can easily do to recognize somebody who changed the world. He shaped not only the way a certain religious group feels about the world or this province, but how we all do. I'm really, again, humbled to be able to be part of this debate. I want to thank my colleague Mr. Klees one more time for allowing me to be part of it. I want to thank the two folks who spoke from the NDP and from the Liberal Party for giving great speeches. I'm very happy that we could share this today with the Canadian Polish and Catholic communities. Thank you all very much.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** Today I'm delighted to join in supporting Bill 25, An Act to proclaim Pope John Paul II Day, and the second reading by Mr. Klees.

Also, we'd like to welcome very distinguished visitors from the Polish-Canadian community who are in the east gallery today: Mr. Fajarczuk, representing the Polish Credit Union; Mr. Flis, who was introduced earlier; Mr. Goldyn, the president of the Canadian-Polish Foundation; Mrs. Jacobs of the Catholic Women's League; Mrs. Morgan, who represents the Canadian Polish Congress, and Neil McCarthy, who represents the Archdiocese of Toronto. Welcome to the debate today, and congratulations, I hope.

His Holiness John Paul II became Pope in 1978. Since I was elected three weeks later, I had no idea that our



paths would cross a number of times. His papacy affected me politically and personally. I first met His Holiness as cardinal of Poland when he visited the very dynamic Polish community in 1972 right here in Toronto. As Pope John Paul II, he came back in 1984 to visit the Polish community, specifically the St. Stanislaus and St. Casimir's Polish credit union. The statue in front commemorates that event, and anyone who goes to Roncesvalles Avenue can see the statue in full force.

But my most significant meeting occurred when I was part of a delegation organized by the Canadian Polish Congress. We presented His Holiness with a very large painting, painted by a Toronto artist, of Nicolaus Copernicus, the astronomer who started a revolution by publishing his theory that the sun, and not the earth, was the centre of the universe. Now, why did this Pope want to see this painting hang in the Polish Pilgrim's House, the Dom Pielgrzymy? As he explained, "We, as Catholics, are not anti-science, because I believe science will embrace spiritual reality." He told me personally to study the fathers of quantum physics. I did that and I still do to this day, and I came to the most revolutionary discovery of our generation: that we have taken the Newtonian mechanical paradigm, and this is meeting its match in quantum physics. The separation between science and faith that Descartes convinced us of, mind and body: We swallowed this idea as a whole, but it proved not to be true. Through quantum physics, we have undeniable scientific proof that the observer, you and I, bring as much to reality as the world we perceive to be real. In short, science and faith do something and have something in common and are certainly able to speak to each other. They are, in fact, a way to reach the spiritual reality.

In 2005, I was invited to India by His Holiness Swamjee Harry Persaud and I had to give a talk on what's called "spiritus familiares," but it quickly changed to what John Paul II had said the week before. He asked, "How do we make Christ a personal saviour in our lives? How do we understand the Christian tradition in a way that makes sense to us?" In short, how do we bring Christian tradition specifically to an individual?

And so that kind of a tradition—not only the scientific tradition, the science part of this Pope, which indicated that he was able to go beyond a very specific spiritual reality, but the scientific tradition—was also enhanced by a very specific idea of how to bring this Christian idea of a personal saviour into one's life. So when this Pope said, "Christ, come into my life," the Indian tradition, and we look at the Vedas as an example, which was discussed at that time when I was in India, speaks of something similar.

1420

The major idea here would be simply this: Here is a Pope who embraced many traditions, whether it's scientific, whether it's personal, in terms of a personal God that came to him, or whether it's a multi-faith idea that many of my colleagues talked about previously.

This Pope was someone very special. His broad appeal touched many of the traditions which all of us in this

chamber embrace, whether it is Judaism, whether it is Christianity, whether it is Sikhism, whether it is Hinduism, whether it is Taoism, or whether it is other traditions, in terms of Islam. It didn't matter to this Pope, because he respected one simple and basic idea, and that is that there are many ways to find spiritual reality, that there are many ways to find God.

To that end, we're here today to devote a special day to John Paul II, this very special Pope who showed us that there are many traditions that we can embrace. So I'm certainly delighted that in this multicultural Ontario, we can proclaim that we respect all religions and that this Pope was the main example that there are many ways to God. That is why we respect and, I would even say, love His Holiness Pope John Paul II. Certainly, we support Pope John Paul II Day today.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** I thank all members for their contribution to the debate.

The honourable member from Newmarket–Aurora, Mr. Klees, you have up to two minutes for your response.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I want to thank my colleagues who participated in this debate: my colleague the member for Nepean–Carleton, Ms. MacLeod; the member for Parkdale–High Park; the member for York South–Weston; and the member for Davenport.

This has been a very moving experience for me as well. I thank Pope John Paul II for his words, "be not afraid," because they challenged me to have the courage to bring this bill forward. I can see from the debate and the encouragement that I have had from my fellow colleagues in this House that it was, in fact, the right thing to do.

We know this room is often filled with a great deal of contentious debate. That was not present for this hour, and it was indeed a very pleasant place to be, and encouraging to hear the support of members on all sides of the House.

I want to pay special tribute to my executive assistant, Alex Roman, whose dedication to this bill was nothing short of inspirational. It would not have come to the floor of the Legislature in the form that it did without his encouragement of me, personally, and I want to thank him for that.

I want to acknowledge the presence in the House today of Neil MacCarthy, director of public relations and communications for the Archdiocese of Toronto. Mr. MacCarthy is here as the representative of His Grace the Archbishop of Toronto and president of the Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Most Reverend Thomas Collins.

Also, Mr. Jesse Flis has been referred to, the former member of Parliament for High Park and the chairman of the board of directors of the John Paul II Care Centre of Copernicus Lodge, who has been an enthusiastic supporter. I want to thank him for his encouragement as well.

I want to also recognize the presence of Wladyslaw Lizoń, the president of the Canadian Polish Congress; Elizabeth Morgan, the secretary general; and Karl



Fujarczuk, the chairman of the board of directors of the Polish Parishes Credit Union Ltd. Welcome to you.

I also want to acknowledge the presence of Margaret Ann Jacobs, the chair of the Catholic Women's League of Canada. Thank you for being here. Thank you for your support.

I look forward to the vote on this important bill and look forward to this important day becoming part of the annual recognition on the part of Ontarians of an incredibly important man in the history of the world as we know it today.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. For our guests in the galleries and those watching at home, we will vote on this, Mr. Klees's ballot item, in about 100 minutes.

We have two other ballot items to deal with.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I've just been notified that Mr. Kwinter is indisposed, and we would seek unanimous consent for a short, five-minute recess.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Agreed, a five-minute recess?

This House is recessed for about five minutes.

*The House recessed from 1425 to 1431.*

## CURRICULUM

**Mr. Monte Kwinter:** I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should develop a school science strategy, to encourage more Ontario elementary and secondary students to pursue a career in the sciences.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Mr. Kwinter moves private members' notice of motion number 76.

Pursuant to standing order 98, Mr. Kwinter, you have 12 minutes for your presentation.

**Mr. Monte Kwinter:** Ontario is well positioned to compete in a 21st-century, knowledge-based economy. We are leaders in science and innovation and a centre for scientific learning. Research in Motion, the Kitchener-Waterloo company that developed the BlackBerry; the MaRS Discovery District in Toronto; and the Ministry of Research and Innovation, the only such ministry in Canada, are just some examples of leading-edge scientific initiatives and achievements.

We have the challenge and the opportunity to harness the Ontario scientific community's resources to increase student achievement and to build a globally competitive economy. Ontario in the Creative Age is a recently released report co-authored by Roger Martin, dean of the Rotman School of Management, and Richard Florida, director of the Martin Prosperity Institute, and it states, "It's vital that we develop strategies that position our province for sustained and balanced prosperity."

A school science strategy would guide our efforts and better deliver science in our schools. It would bring together academics, researchers, parents and others to develop a plan for our students in every subject and in every grade. Investing in science education today will

mean that Ontario has the scientists, the researchers and the engineers it will need for the new economy.

Here are some quotes supporting science education.

"Practical suggestions for any and all MPs, especially the newly elected ones: Acquaint yourself with the impressive efforts being made to interest and involve Canadian youth in science and technology by programs such as Let's Talk Science and the Canada-Wide Science Fair organized by the Youth Science Foundation Canada." That was from Preston Manning, former leader of the official opposition and president of the Manning Centre for Building Democracy and chair of the board of advisers for the National Institute for Nanotechnology at the University of Alberta.

This is a quote from Dr. Roberta Bondar, an astronaut in the Canadian Space Agency: "As a grade 13 student, I participated in the city science fair in Toronto and then went on to represent my region at the Canada-Wide Science Fair. It was an experience that would ultimately define my life."

This is a quote from Adam Bly, the founder and editor-in-chief of Seed Magazine and Seed Media Group: "My eighth-grade biology teacher ... and my 12th-grade chemistry teacher ... sold us on the enormity of the questions, not the minutiae of the answers.... And they encouraged me to participate in our regional science fair; it turned out to be a pivotal experience in my life, and sparked the passion for what I do today."

Mike Lazaridis, the founder and CEO of Research in Motion, producers of the BlackBerry: "We need to change our culture so that science and technology are seen to be the 'in' thing.... We need them to aspire to be scientists, engineers and technologists. In the end, that will make the biggest impact on Canada's future."

This is a quote from Chaviva Hošek, who was a member in this Legislature many years ago and is now president and CEO of the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research:

"Scientific literacy has never been more important to very many aspects of our lives than it is today. Let's Talk Science provides invaluable tools to help Canadian children learn about science. It creates innovative curriculum materials for science education that are used in hundreds of schools, with children who range in age from the very young to those who are completing high school. It engages very large numbers of graduate students in the sciences through outreach to the schools.

"Their work is a very sound investment in Canada's future capacity, both to create knowledge and to use knowledge intelligently."

Canadian astronaut Mark Garneau wrote, in a recent newspaper article, "Our neighbours to the south, led by Barack Obama, grasp the importance of science and so do many other countries."

President Obama, who, as you know, just by coincidence is visiting Canada today, is proposing a plan to prepare all their children for the 21st-century economy. This is his proposal:



He will make math and science education a national priority by recruiting math and science degree graduates to the teaching profession and will support efforts to help those teachers learn from professionals in the field. He will also work to ensure that all children have access to a strong science curriculum at all grade levels.

He will improve and prioritize science assessments. Science assessments need to do more than test facts. They need to measure a student's higher-order thinking skills, including inference, logic, data analysis, interpretation, forming questions and communication. He will work with governors and educators to ensure that state assessments measure these skills.

He will increase science and math graduates by improving science and math education in kindergarten through grade 12, to prepare more students for these studies in college. They will work to increase the numbers of science and engineering graduates and encourage undergraduates studying math and science to pursue graduate studies.

He will also work to increase the representation of minorities and women in the science and technology pipeline, tapping the diversity of the country to meet the increasing demand for a skilled workforce. The challenges of the 21st century can only be met by combining many skills from people with many backgrounds. The country's diversity is a clear competitive advantage if they use it.

That is the end of his statement on science education. These are laudable goals, and we applaud them.

We also take pride in our investments and accomplishments, which will provide us with an excellent platform on which to build a school science strategy. We have invested \$4 billion in our schools since 2003. We are reintroducing environmental education in every subject and every grade, after it was cut by the previous government. We'll invest \$1.15 billion in the Next Generation of Jobs Fund, with a new 45-day guarantee of a response to any completed application.

We are investing \$3.5 million in 2007-08 to the Youth Science Foundation. We're investing \$1.5 million in Let's Talk Science, to inspire high school students to pursue careers in science and technology. We're investing \$650 million in the Ontario research fund, which over four years has supported 772 leading-edge research projects, leveraging \$860 million in investments; and \$79.7 million to MaRS has leveraged \$450 million in investments; and \$31.4 million in the Ontario research and commercialization project.

All of this is leading up to a need for us to really change the attitude of students about science. I'm not talking about changing the science curriculum. The Ministry of Education has a very ambitious and very, very thoughtful program for teaching science in our schools. Unfortunately, it is just that: It is being taught, but there hasn't been a follow-up. Towards the end of my presentation, in a couple of minutes, I'm going to show you a couple of examples. I've got a group of students in the gallery I'm going to tell you about to show you what can be done outside of the curriculum.

1440

Ontario's economic and social prosperity depends on our ability to compete and win in the global marketplace. We are out to inspire young people, to establish a firm foundation of interest in science, technology and innovative ideas. Isaac Asimov, the renowned science fiction writer wrote, "Science can be introduced to children well or poorly. If poorly, children can be turned away from science; they can develop a lifelong antipathy."

We are committed to ensuring that we have the next generation of innovators and leaders with the skills and qualifications necessary to support an innovation-based economy. Our government and our partners are working together to increase the level of awareness of the key role played by science, engineering, mathematics, business and entrepreneurship in a knowledge-based economy.

I want to spend the last couple of minutes that I have talking about two incredible programs. One of them was started in a school in my riding, Northview Heights collegiate, or Northview Heights Secondary School as it's known, which introduced a magazine called Canadian Young Scientist Journal. This is done by students, and it is a peer-reviewed magazine that allows professionals outside of the school system to evaluate programs. This particular first issue—and they've already had two, and a third one is in the works—has a picture of a wing, and this wing has got a couple of holes in it. The article is called A Hole in a Wing: Not Always a Bad Thing. This was written by a grade 12 student, and it has been entered in several science fairs. The particular project started when he was in grade 9. He's now in grade 12. His name is Vladislav Ternovsky. He's a high school student at Northview Heights Secondary School, and he has won prizes at every level, including, in 2008, the first prize in the World Virtual Science and Engineering Fair. That's an incredible accomplishment for a young man who is in grade 12. He has a theory that says by putting holes into the wing flaps, he can improve the efficiency of aircraft. He's also working on a second paper that he will have in this magazine shortly, and it is dealing with the whole issue of getting energy from ice.

There's another group, called Switch, and they are here right now in the members' gallery. They are from William Lyon Mackenzie Collegiate Institute in my riding. They have a program to make every school in Ontario self-dependent on energy consumption with solar and wind. This is something that they are advancing very, very aggressively. The students from both those programs are in the members' gallery. I am running out of time to do it, but when I get my two-minute response, I would like to introduce them.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** The nice thing about a resolution like this, with congratulations to my friend from York Centre, is that there's nothing really to debate in this resolution. It is short; it is straightforward; it is eminently worthy of support. I do support it, and I will vote for it.



History is the foundation of the present, and so the present, therefore, must be the foundation for the future. I look back at my own childhood experience, and I was a science geek. But a science geek in the 1960s was somebody who played around with radios, and that's what I did. I suppose the science geeks 20 or 30 years before me played around with two cans and some string and talked over that; or maybe we pointed a light at a device called a radiometer and watched it turn as a result of its absorption of the energy that came from that light, which was the precursor to today's solar panel.

More recently, the geeks play with computers—and I use “geek” in the very nicest sense of that word. Everything that computers have spawned is part of our culture today, but the things that came are a result of the work of geeks, geeks like Bill Gates, for example.

Economically, Ontario is based largely in the past—brute-force manufacturing diluted by a global economy—and we're currently seeing the results of that, but there are some very notable exceptions, which I will refer to later, and we have to build on those.

Science is the key to the future success of this province. Very literally, our world depends on it; Ontario depends on it. Ontario depends on it in the very same sense and as a basic element of our employment infrastructure, going forward. Do we support our children or not? What society doesn't, and what society shouldn't? Trite, it would be, to call them the key to tomorrow, but also absolutely true. We need solutions to environmental problems. Who is going to create those? Some of them are evident, sitting in the gallery today.

Technological development is a part of our everyday life. My colleague has referred to Research in Motion, which merged technologies that we saw coming forward from about 20 years ago: the personal digital assistant, the cellular phone, e-mail, MP3 players, the video camera, the digital video camera. I dreamed of a device that put all of those things into one box 15 or 20 years ago, but Lazaridis and Balsillie and company invented that device and there's one at every desk in this chamber.

Raising Ontario's international profile through science via competitions for the young and developing a competitive edge for us all is absolutely essential. Our kids right now are a little bit scared, probably because we're a little bit scared for them. Our responsibility has to be to build confidence in and of our youth, through achievement and through scientific innovation.

My profession, or trade, was broadcaster. I entered that profession in 1966 and at that time, being a broadcaster meant AM radio. Then it became FM radio. Then it became satellite radio. Now, communicating with each other on a mass scale is primarily Web-based. Who knows what's coming? But one thing I can tell this House: The young people who are sitting here, and millions like them around the world, are the ones who are going to find that path.

I've witnessed an amazing evolution of technology: eight-track tape, cassette tape, and now iPods, which are nothing more than computer storage of sound. My son

lives and works in the city of Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates. I see him, even though he's on the other side of the world, as a result of some of these developments. Who knows what one of the students here today will do? Who knows what they'll be responsible for, in terms of an invention that will similarly change the way we live in the entire world?

Scientific discoveries impact our world. They train young minds to be creative. Our children are bright; they are eager to learn. Without the necessary emphasis on science, without challenging them, we risk boring them and stalling all of this.

School is not just a babysitting service. School is a place of discovery. It's a place where you learn to try, it's a place where you learn to succeed, and it's a place where you learn not to be afraid of failure.

I want to thank my colleague for asking us to rededicate this province to promoting the learning of science, technology and mathematics here in Ontario. I too want to acknowledge the gallery guests. Two Toronto district board high schools are represented here, as he said. Students of William Lyon Mackenzie Collegiate Institute advanced the concept of powering schools through solar and wind power called Switch, for solar and wind initiatives toward change.

The students from Northview Heights Secondary School are the founding editorial team of the Canadian Young Scientist Journal, as my colleague has also mentioned, and they're here with my friend, Trustee James Pasternak, a very strong public servant. Trustee Pasternak has been a tireless supporter of both these initiatives and others, through the area of my colleague the member from York Centre, which is parallel to his. Dozens of parents come out to Trustee Pasternak's events because he is fully committed to his Ward 5 constituents in science, music, sports and special education.

Today we recognize and celebrate not so much the coming together of community but the celebration of an idea. At W.L. Mackenzie, Switch gives credence to the view that motivation does lead to innovation. At Northview Heights Secondary School, we salute students and their teachers whose literary study of innovation follows a long history of Canadian contributions to science—notably Northview teacher Alexandre Noukhovitch, the mentor and motivator behind the Canadian Young Scientist Journal. In short, I support the resolution and I welcome our guests.

1450

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Toronto—Danforth.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The honourable member for Toronto—Danforth.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** It's my intention, Speaker, to get a large button here, visible from your chair—

**Interjection:** For all of us.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** —so that all of you can know which riding I'm from. I know you know my name, Mr. Speaker.

I rise to speak on the motion to develop a school science strategy and I thank the member from York



Centre for bringing this forward. Certainly everyone in this chamber and everyone in this province understands the importance and the value of scientific study and innovation for the future and prosperity of Ontario. Many people look at industrial development. They see products that are commercialized, they see technologies that transform our world, and they often think they've just sort of sprung fully formed onto the world stage, when in fact there is a whole area of scientific culture, scientific analysis, pure science that makes it possible for those technological developments and commercializations to take place. We in Ontario need a culture of science and scientific inquiry to actually make sure that we have an economy in the future that's stable and prosperous. There needs to be an emphasis on encouraging young people, through elementary and secondary systems, to explore a variety of areas of study, particularly in the sciences.

It is interesting to me that my niece, who's at McMaster University, who when she was young was always curious, very animal- and pet-focused, is studying to be a surgeon. Her early interest in animal life and animal physiology comes out in this deep interest in biology, in human health and how we function physically and biologically in the world. If we want to be a jurisdiction that's developing and nurturing a future generation that will be able to tackle the challenges we face, a generation that will generate the ideas to create the technology, fill the jobs of today and the future, we need to have a science curriculum and a science culture in our schools that will give us a population that's scientifically literate. I'm concerned, though, that when we look at the education system in Ontario as a whole, there are some fundamental challenges that go beyond the scope of the resolution we're debating today. Although this resolution is a useful one to have and it's a good starting point for debate, we will need a lot more than this resolution and this direction of the House to fix our educational system.

I want to talk about a few of those fundamental issues in our education system. Issues that create barriers for students, bar their access to academic success and in many cases keep people from accessing higher education make it something that's woefully out of reach. The first concern, obviously, is the funding formula. The approach of this government to the funding formula, one they have not dealt with in more than five years, is short-changing young people in this province. People for whom we have profound care, who in turn we hope will care for us as we get older, are not being given the education resources that they need. If you think about that faulty funding formula—what does it mean to a student, to a parent who's working hard, hoping that their children or their child will get ahead? How will they get the best for their child? Well, if you want to know what it means in concrete terms, talk to the cash-strapped school boards that have been forced to divert maintenance funding, funding set aside for cleanliness and safety of our schools, into other areas. Frankly, if you go to schools in this province—and I've gone to many of them—you will often be taken aback by the state of disrepair and non-cleanliness.

When I left local politics in 1997, the schools were still in relatively good shape. The full force of the Harris funding cuts hadn't kicked in. When I came back in 2006, holding meetings in public schools, high schools, separate schools in my riding, shocked at the change, the simple reality is that that change has not been corrected, that the schools have not gotten the funding they need. We know that when we talk to parents, funding for special education is not there in the way it needs to be there—students placed in classes without the proper support, meaning that their futures are constrained, their horizons limited, when in fact we should be doing everything we can to make sure that those students who need special education get the supports so they can live independently, so they can support themselves, so they can carve out their own lives in this society.

We have seen, and I know this from talking to parents, that their children are not getting the time from the teachers, in class, that they need. Fewer and fewer students from other countries, new Canadian students, are receiving English-as-a-second-language support that they need to succeed on their own. Instead, they are being placed in regular classes. Again, that puts them at a substantial disadvantage, a disadvantage that will reflect down through the years in terms of their standard of living and their opportunities to actually build the kind of life that all of us in this legislative building want people to have.

In this province of Ontario today, class sizes in grades 4 to 8 continue to be unacceptably large, reducing the amount of time students need that's essential for teachers to give to those students. When I talk to parents in schools throughout my riding, the reality of the commitment to a cap of 20 students in a class has been that outside of the areas that are capped, the class sizes balloon. You get double grades in a classroom. There's a tremendous burden that teachers have to carry and that students, in turn, have lowered on to their shoulders.

I need to talk about standardized testing and its impact on quality of education. If we talk today about how to inspire young people to take on a science education, to expand their horizons, to think creatively, to think analytically, to delve into fundamental issues, then you have to ask: How at the same time does that square with a system that is so focused on those students doing well on a standardized test? Too often I have had to sit and talk with parents whose children have a very narrow range of learning. That range of learning is focused on making sure that the students do well on the standardized tests, instead of the broader range of learning that you actually need in a world that is changing very rapidly technologically, socially and politically. We need, more than anything else, to develop the ability of students to think rather than to simply memorize, rather than to simply narrowly focus in on a narrow band of questions that they are going to have to deal with in a standardized test. If teachers and schools will have their ability, their future funding, their assessment of their quality based on those tests rather than the assessment of the ability of



students to learn and think, then that is where those schools and those teachers are going to put their resources. That won't give us tomorrow's leaders. I understand the need to sample to get a sense of what is happening in the student population, but our current focus is not one that's going to give us the results that we want.

School closures: You can go anywhere in Ontario and talk to people—to parents, to communities—about school closures and the impact that they have. In my riding, Toronto–Danforth, we have had a series of waves, that we've seen over the years, of schools that at one time were largely empty, and within a decade, because of changing demographics, find themselves bursting at the seams. That's the simple reality of waves in population. Families are established, children are born, children go to school, they move on, parents are left alone in their homes, there are fewer children to go to school, the numbers in that school drop, and then again those people move on to apartment buildings and other families move in.

1500

The lack of understanding that there are these demographic waves means that we may well, in the next five years, lose school properties all over Ontario that will not be economically recoverable again. Those spaces, those properties, once lost, are gone forever. We need a commitment to hold on to them so that when the children come back, the space is there for them. In the meantime, there are a variety of other needs in communities that can be met by using those buildings. It is unacceptable to go forward on education planning without taking account of those realities. We have to see an investment in the schools, in the children and in learning that broadens our thinking and broadens our minds. We need a funding formula that allows that to happen.

I see that I am running short on time, but I briefly want to address post-secondary education funding.

It's clear, if we have science culture and science teaching at another level in the elementary and secondary fields, that we're going to need the facilities, the resources and the teachers at the post-secondary level to actually fully develop that knowledge and those skills. We're not seeing that in this province.

As you are well aware, Ontario is in last place in per capita funding for students. I think we're second highest in terms of our tuition fees. We are talking today about making large-scale investments in elementary and secondary schools, and essentially choking off that development when it comes to our young people in their early adult years fully developing their abilities.

We need to take on a science culture at the elementary and secondary levels, but we also need a very large-scale reinvestment in our educational system in this province, large-scale reinvestment in our young people. That's the minimum that this province is going to need if it's going to have a future, if it's going to have the skills it needs to take on this world.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I want to congratulate the member from York Centre for bringing this great achievement and a series of achievements in this important area to our attention.

I certainly concur with my colleague from Thornhill. This is a time to celebrate these incredible students. We sit here and most of the time we do just what the member from Toronto–Danforth said: We talk about these issues that are in the headlines, but meanwhile we forget about the students and their achievements in our schools.

I think what the member from York Centre has brought to our attention is that we've got some amazing things going on in our schools, and as much as our schools always need work and always need more infrastructure etc., there are some incredibly innovative teachers, principals and students, obviously, at the heart of them, and parents who support that innovation, and they are to be applauded. I think one of the things we don't do enough of as Ontarians and as Canadians is that we don't encourage people enough. We always look at the glass as being half empty, and we don't think of the excellent achievement that takes place in our schools.

As Mr. Kwinter said, Vladislav Ternovsky from Northview Heights won the international gold medal in this area for his project. That's something to be acknowledged—the great work at Northview secondary school and at William Lyon Mackenzie. I actually used to hang around with guys from William Lyon Mackenzie—Stu Winick, if you look back on your wall. There was another guy, a great quarterback, Marty—I can't remember his name; it was too long ago. Anyway, they were good guys.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** They kicked you out.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** No, no. They were good people.

Anyway, what I wanted to say is that our schools have been, in some cases, undermined by just the lack of emphasis and focus. What Mr. Kwinter is doing here today is giving us that focus.

When I was talking to the member from York Centre about this incredible achievement in your magazine, I was thinking of two experiences that I had in two schools in the west end of Toronto. At Chaminade high school, a science teacher, Bob Giza, created a hatchery at the back of the gymnasium at the school.

He went to Duffins Creek, in the far east end of city. They'd get the eggs from the trout out of Duffins Creek. They brought them back to the hatchery at the school in North York, and when the eggs became little minnows, they stocked Black Creek, which was considered almost a dead creek, with brown trout. So because of the students at the school and the leadership of the teacher, there are now brown trout in Black Creek, which there used to be 100 years ago.

There were over 300 students who went up there one day, in their boots, up and down Black Creek, taking out garbage and shopping carts, all having a great time and learning, obviously, about biology and all these incredibly important and interesting things, all inspired by the teachers and supported by the staff—the whole staff



was involved with it. And the community was so happy to see the creek cleaned of all this garbage.

Then there was another case further downstream on a smaller creek in Toronto near the industrial area—Minister Phillips knows this area, where there used to be the stockyards. There's another creek running back there, called Lavender Creek, and another school there, called Archbishop Romero. The students from that school got inspired by the kids upriver at Chaminade, and went in there and did geomapping of all the pollution sources up and down Lavender Creek. They did the same thing: They went to Lavender Creek, cleaned it out, identified all the polluters up and down Lavender Creek and reported to the city of Toronto. They cleaned out Lavender Creek and planted trees. There were no more soap suds in Lavender Creek and no more garbage.

That is the type of inspiration that teachers can give, and students can achieve if they're given support and inspiration and recognition. I think what you're doing by being here today at the invitation of the member from York Centre is that we get a chance to acknowledge the incredible potential there is in our high schools and in our young people. We sometimes underestimate the incredible contributions you can make, no matter whether you're in grade 9 or grade 12. You are to be praised and acknowledged, and your teachers and staff and your parents, who give you the support to do that.

Thank you so much for what you're doing. Hopefully, through this kind of focus, we can help you do more of what you do.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** It's a real pleasure to be here today to discuss Monte Kwinter's resolution, which indicates that the province should develop a school science strategy to encourage more elementary students and secondary students to pursue careers in the sciences.

Of course I'm going to support this. I think we would all like to see significant investments and enhancements to our educational system. As a mother of a child soon to be going to school next year, of course we want every Ontario student, every child who goes through our great schools in this province, to have the best of the best opportunities. There is no question that science will be key to our future success in this province. I want to touch on that a little bit.

This has been a very rough year for this province, and we're only two months into the year. We're now a have-not province. We're accepting transfer payments from the federal government for the first time in our history. Last month, over 71,000 Ontarians lost their jobs. We're in the middle of a recession. We were the first in economic growth; now we're the worst in this country. And at a time when we need to be reinvesting in ourselves and in our students, we're finding even more cutbacks.

So I view this as a very promising resolution that acknowledges that Ontario is in significant rough times—economic hardship—and we need to do everything we possibly can to invest in one of our greatest resources,

which are today's students. I wasn't the greatest science student in school—

*Interjection.*

1510

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I know. I had the gift of gab. I was very good in English and in those other sorts of social arts and civics, but I can tell you, I was always a curious student. I look at my own daughter now, who is 3, going on 4, and she's so amazed at some of the different things that are science, in terms of the games that can be played and the opportunities that can be had. My colleague Mr. Shurman talked about two tin cans and a string: That's how kids used to speak to one another, and I think we all have fond memories of different science projects. Unfortunately I don't remember doing that, but I know that we did enjoy other things. I remember plugging a battery into a potato and somehow lighting a light bulb. There are amazing opportunities, and I think that's why we should continue to support Ontario science fairs and certainly this educational opportunity here.

I've got about two and a half minutes left and I've touched on the relevance of science in our economy and how I haven't been the greatest of science students, but I admire those who do have that forte. I also want to talk a little bit about the importance of investing in children. I have a similar resolution right now on the order paper, and it's to enshrine in legislation that November 20 be International Day of the Child and recognized as such in this chamber, in this province. I think it's important too, not just that children are aware of the opportunities that science creates, but that they are aware of their rights as children, as persons.

As you know, in 1994 this province became a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It formed the basis of a piece of legislation I have that I hope to debate in this chamber in the next few months, which is a children's safety and protection rights act. That, of course, has a series of elements in it that deal with the protection of children and enhanced legislative tools for police and for parents, but it also includes the resolution I was just talking about, which is that November 20 of each year should be considered, in the schools, a day when children are informed of their rights in society. I think it's important that we continue to invest in children and that we continue to have specific programs that teach them what they can be and give them the opportunities that we all wish we had or that we did have and were grateful for as students.

Science is going to be very important in the years ahead as we train our students, whether it is to cover off that doctor shortage so many of us have in our rural communities or in communities where, like mine, the high-tech sector has been ravaged by the recession, and we need to enhance that. It's going to be important as we, as Mr. McGuinty's government suggests, are going to become a green economy and we're going to need those students who are trained in the sciences.

Finally, I just want to say this, what with the Minister of Natural Resources here: She and I just had a dis-



cussion about coyotes in my community of Nepean—Carleton, and how we need conservationists to work with us. I'm very happy that she's working with us, but it's important that these children today are prepared for the science of tomorrow.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** I'm very pleased to join in the debate this afternoon on the member from York Centre's motion before this Legislature. Just a couple of things to start: This is always a wonderful opportunity and gives us a chance on a less partisan basis, on occasion, to share in some priorities as members bring them forward. It also gives us an opportunity to encourage government where at times they can't focus attention in this Legislature on some element of detail within legislation that's brought forward, but this process allows us to do that. Thus, I'm particularly pleased to be able to stand today in support of this particular motion, a motion which speaks to a school science strategy to encourage more elementary and secondary students—particularly probably secondary students, but the science program is broadly based—to pursue a career in the sciences.

Many of us in this place have either been in the educational field or have family in the educational field, and certainly each and every one of us touches our local education boards on an ongoing and regular basis, so we get to see what's happening there. I'm well aware that students need to have skills in math, they need to be involved in the social sciences, they need to be involved in the humanities and they need physical activity. But they particularly need to be encouraged in the area of the sciences, and that's exactly the point the member for York Centre, Mr. Kwinter, is making,

The programs that are set out in the science programs, just looking at the foundation of those from grades 1 to 8, speak to science and technology and talk about life systems. They really are a precursor to looking at medicine, agriculture and veterinary medicine. They speak, in those years, about structures and mechanisms, and that speaks to the physical world in which we live. We're having an awful lot of discussion right about now about infrastructure investment. Without the scientists and engineers who design the types of things that need to be built or develop the products one uses to build them, where would we be today?

They speak to the idea of matter and energy: how we are going to build a culture of conservation in the province of Ontario, how we're going to conserve energy, how we're going to make good use of what we have. If we don't train young people to do that and if we don't encourage them, if we don't provide windows of opportunity, if we don't point out for them where the opportunities are to develop career paths in the sciences, if we don't make science not only valuable from a learning context but show the value of that for their future endeavours and how they can bring value-added into community—I think that too often as educators, in the role I played and I think some of those in the education

field, there is a tendency to steer young people toward opportunities for their future careers based on what we feel will make them feel good or what will be a good career or what will make them good citizens, what will provide a basis to earn a living and raise their families. But sometimes we forget about ensuring that we tell them and teach them about the intrinsic values they can bring to the community by virtue of learning and using these skills, and science is an area that probably is of particular interest.

I was mentioning the three or four matters that are under the grades 1 to 8 foundation for science and technology and how those relate to future career opportunities and why educators, in particular, and parents and community have to encourage young people in the area of sciences. The fourth one is earth and space systems: What is our place in the universe? That's kind of the big picture. We look back to the 1960s. I was watching on TV, last night or the night before, the fourth in the series From the Earth to the Moon. It's the Apollo-series documentary. You think back to the 1960s and what was happening—the challenges that faced the astronaut program and the space program to get to the moon—and you think about the young people we're training today about finding their place in the universe, about reaching those opportunities and challenges that present themselves.

We have to do more than just let young people know that while they have to take their physics and they have to take their biology because it's going to get them into college or university, or into a particular program, as the case might be, we have to show them the value in doing that: the value they can add to the community, the value they can add to the life they live, not just as individuals but the opportunities they have for others.

Speaker, I appreciate the bit of time you have allowed me to speak to this. I particularly said when I started that this is a wonderful opportunity we have here to bring attention and focus to matters that a government might not otherwise, in bringing forward legislation, be able to concentrate its efforts on. But if, through this type of process, government can see its way clear to being more specific in the pursuit of career as part of the science program, I think it will serve young people well. Certainly, as this economy changes, the sciences are going to be increasingly important for those young people.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** In the brief time I have to speak in support of this motion to develop a school science strategy, it just happened that earlier this week I ran into the folks who work with the professional engineers, and they said, "Liz, you're just the person we want to see. We've been trying to work in high schools to recruit women into engineering, but what we're finding is that very often, even though they may be interested, they don't have the math credits."

So I would just like to leave the thought that when we look at a math and science or, at least, a science and



technology strategy, we need to remember, particularly for the physical sciences, that mathematics is the language of the physical sciences. It's very important—and I would like to emphasize this, as a mathematician—that we make sure that kids also get good training in math to complement those science skills, so that they can go forward and have great careers in the sciences.

1520

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The honourable member, Mr. Kwinter, you have up to two minutes for your response.

**Mr. Monte Kwinter:** I want to thank the members who participated in the debate: the members for Thornhill, Toronto–Danforth, Eglinton–Lawrence, Nepean–Carleton, Pickering–Scarborough East and Guelph.

I also want to recognize, in the members' gallery, the Toronto District School Board trustee for Ward 5 in York Centre, James Pasternak, and his constituency assistant, David Horowitz, and of course the students and teachers from William Lyon Mackenzie Collegiate Institute and Northview Heights Secondary School. The teacher from William Lyon is Simon Carpenter, with Paulina Bogdanova, Lucas Phuong, Victoria Bislam, Nastassia Paikoff, Ashton Taylor and Raymund Jacildo. The teacher from Northview Heights is Lisa Di Viesti, with students Larissa Dondapaty, David Opare, Kirisanth Subramaniam, Andrew Moreno and Zain Hasan.

In the initial issue of this journal, the Canadian youth science journal, there is a quote from the Handy Guide to Science: "If it's green or wiggles, it's biology. If it stinks, it's chemistry. If it doesn't work, it's physics." That is a fairly simplistic definition of science. I want you to know that these students have turned their back on the simplicity of that, and if you took a look at their accomplishments and what they have done, it really bodes well for us as a society.

I want to congratulate the principals of the schools, the school trustees, the teachers in particular, all of the students, who've really embraced what we are doing. Again, it isn't just a matter of education. It's a matter of commitment and dedication, to make sure that we have the scientific resources to succeed in the 21st century.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We'll vote on Mr. Kwinter's ballot item in about 50 minutes.

Orders of the day.

## ONTARIO AWARD FOR PARAMEDIC BRAVERY ACT, 2009

### LOI DE 2009 SUR LE PRIX DE BRAVOURE DES AUXILIAIRES MÉDICAUX DE L'ONTARIO

Mrs. Van Bommel moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 136, An Act to provide for the Ontario Award for Paramedic Bravery / Projet de loi 136, Loi prévoyant le Prix de bravoure des auxiliaires médicaux de l'Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Mrs. Van Bommel, you have up to 12 minutes for your response, pursuant to standing order 98.

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** I'm pleased to rise today to speak to the second reading of Bill 136. I first introduced this last December.

Before I go further, I would like to first recognize Wayne and Clara Patterson, who are here with us in the members' gallery today. Wayne and Clara have been with me every step of the way in developing Bill 136. From the bill's inception back in 2007 to today, the Patterson family has been at the forefront of promoting the need to recognize the role of paramedics in today's emergency response and management environment.

Today is especially emotional and important for the Pattersons. Just under two years ago, on February 25, 2007, four months before his 31st birthday, their son, paramedic Paul Wayne Patterson, was fatally injured while on duty, responding to an emergency call.

Through Mr. and Mrs. Patterson's strength and encouragement, Bill 136 is intended to recognize our province's paramedics, who, by the very nature of their profession, often go beyond the call of duty to rescue and care for fellow citizens without consideration for their own safety.

February 25, 2007, was a stormy winter day in Chatham–Kent. The paramedics at Sun Parlour Emergency Services were busy responding to multiple emergency calls. Paul Patterson was attending an emergency medical call with two of his colleagues when another call was dispatched by the ambulance communications. The call involved a motor vehicle collision and Paul was ready to respond, together with his emergency response unit. En route to the call, Paul's emergency response vehicle left the icy, snow-covered road. Paul was killed. He died in the line of duty while serving the residents of Chatham–Kent and, by extension, the citizens of Ontario.

This was not the first incident in which Paul acted selflessly. Wayne and Clara supplied me with an array of media articles, letters of appreciation and award certificates. Paul received the Above and Beyond Award from Sun Parlour Emergency Services in 2005 after being involved in an attempt to save a farmer who had rolled his tractor and pesticide sprayer into the farm pond. Paul, along with a number of others, dove into the pond that had already been contaminated by the pesticide sprayer. As the son of a farmer, Paul understood only too well the potential danger of the exposure to pesticides. Sadly, despite their efforts, they were unable to save the farmer.

I want again to take a moment to welcome a number of other guests who have come with the Pattersons to the Ontario Legislature today. I especially want to introduce Paul's twin sister and her husband, Andy and Laura Sanders. With them are a number of Ontario's paramedics who have travelled here and taken valuable time from their duties to be present for the debate and to show their support for this bill.

Bruce Krauter is also joining us today in the members' gallery. Bruce's involvement was invaluable during the



promotion and the research process leading to today's second reading of the bill. Bruce is the operations manager at Sun Parlour Emergency Services and, together with the Pattersons, was instrumental in assisting me in both bringing the importance of the paramedic profession to the attention of the Legislature and, more importantly, bringing forward the need for provincial recognition of the selfless acts of service that so many paramedics provide, in what can be often very dangerous circumstances.

Back in May of 2007, Mr. Krauter wrote a letter to the members for Chatham-Kent and Essex, members Bruce Crozier and Pat Hoy, inquiring as to why there was not a provincial award for paramedic bravery. In his letter, Bruce writes, "Paramedics in our community serve the citizens of these communities as well as persons from across this province and visitors from abroad during any condition, time of day, harmful situation, landscape or duration."

These paramedics are put at risk every day, whether it's environmental, biological, acts of violence or while in transit to a call. In Bruce's over 25 years of service, he has known two paramedics who have died in the line of duty, and knows numerous others who have performed their duties above and beyond the call and put themselves at risk, all in an act to save someone's life.

Bruce wrote about the N.H. McNally Award, which recognizes bravery by pre-hospital professionals in the performance of their duties. This award is presented by the Emergency Medical Services peers, but it is not recognized either provincially or federally. An Ontario award for paramedic bravery is necessary in order to give paramedics in our province the recognition they deserve for their service to all Ontarians.

A paramedic in my riding, Tony Metayer, shared with me the procedures, the medications he can dispense on the scene and en route to hospital in Wallaceburg at the southwest corner of my riding of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex. He tells me paramedics can do everything from defibrillation to intravenous fluid therapy and advanced airway management. They are able to administer seven different drugs to treat conditions such as chest pain, heart attack, hypoglycemia, allergic reactions, breathing difficulties and severe nausea and vomiting.

1530

Paramedics also have oxygen that they can use in many different medical and trauma conditions. Depending on the circumstances, they have the ability to call for an air ambulance to respond at the scene, along with the traditional land ambulance. Considering the wide range of patients that paramedics see every day, their skills as primary care providers have been very beneficial to the patients they treat. I'm sure their early intervention has saved many lives.

Over the 14 years Tony has worked as a paramedic, he has noticed that the scope of practice for paramedics has evolved significantly. The reality is that when an emergency arises, there is an expectation from the public that firefighters, police officers and paramedics will be there when they're needed most.

The role of paramedics is to respond to emergencies, provide medical service and transport patients to medical facilities. In many cases, the initial emergency care provided by paramedics could be the deciding factor between life and death, temporary or permanent disability, a brief hospital stay or prolonged hospitalization. When responding to emergencies, paramedics may not always be given prior knowledge of the extent of the issues that they will be exposed to. In a critical situation, paramedics often experience unexpected and shocking events for which most people would not be prepared. Paramedics very often are required to deliver their services in unregulated, uncontrolled, unpredictable and often hazardous environmental situations.

While identified with the health care community due to the medical scope of their practice, paramedics often serve alongside police and firefighters in attending at and dealing with emergency situations and settings. Paramedics must be prepared to respond to unfolding emergency settings beyond the medical situation to which they were initially responding. Paramedics will often be required to work within an emergency setting that includes other emergency services colleagues. Examples of calls to which paramedics would attend include working fires, assaults, car accidents, drug overdoses and alcohol abuse, to mention just a few.

In Canada, it is estimated that one paramedic a year dies in the line of duty, with 18 having lost their lives between 1995 and 2006. The occupational fatality rate for paramedics is similar to that of other emergency public workers, including police officers and firefighters. It has been 2,000 years since the good Samaritan stopped and tended to an injured stranger at the roadside. There is no record of the name of this helper, but his act of compassion will be with us for all time, a symbol for all who care for a stranger.

It is my intention that Ontario's current good Samaritans, the nearly 6,000 paramedics across the province, be recognized appropriately for events which compel them to act selflessly to rescue and care for another without giving consideration for their own safety. I'm looking forward to hearing from my colleagues on this very important matter in the House today and I ask for your support.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I'm pleased to rise to support Bill 136 and my colleague from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex. I'd also like to extend a warm welcome to the paramedics who are visiting with us in the galleries today. I had a chance to meet with some of you during a reception at noon. One of the things they were able to perform was to take my vitals and tell me that my pulse ox, my blood pressure and my resting heart rate are significantly lower and more healthy than those of several of my colleagues from the NDP. So I thank them for that.

This bill recognizes that paramedics perform a service that is essential to the health, the well-being and the



safety of our society. I, like many here, have been on the receiving end of paramedical services. Particularly as my parents aged and grew more frail, I would arrive oftentimes to find paramedics attending to their needs. I can tell you, seeing the blue uniforms in attendance makes you worry an awful lot less.

Paramedics in Ontario are new, and I speak in relative terms. We used to watch television programs featuring paramedics that came from the United States 20 years ago, maybe a little more than that. Now it has become a routine service here in Ontario, dependable and very much depended upon. We offer young, motivated people, as Paul Wayne Patterson was, the opportunity to become paramedics through courses in our community colleges.

As the critic for citizenship and immigration for the official opposition, I have been privileged to witness the recognition of many citizens who have accomplished great things. In fact, I have had the pleasure of handing out some of these awards. We in Ontario recognize bravery of police officers and firefighters, but we have not yet extended that recognition to our paramedics. That is wrong. They are first responders equal to any others where life and death hang in the balance. Paramedics, like firefighters and police officers, join the profession recognizing that this is no 9 to 5 job. Their commitment extends beyond their shift. They don't pay attention to the clock. They are never really off duty. They certainly don't get snow days, like the icy one that claimed the life of the person in whose memory our colleague from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex has put forward her bill.

Paul Wayne Patterson's entire life was about helping others, and that life was cut short doing what he loved best. Paul was a paramedic on duty with Sun Parlour EMS in Chatham-Kent and, as we have heard, died on February 25, 2007, travelling to assist others.

We like to recognize service and contribution here in Ontario. We have a variety of awards, as I have mentioned before. We have the Order of Ontario, the Ontario Medal for Firefighter Bravery, the Ontario Medal for Police Bravery, the Ontario Medal for Good Citizenship and the Ontario Medal for Young Volunteers. I think we have room for one more. Police officers and firefighters will tell you that when someone in their profession dies in the line of duty, even though they may be thousands of miles away, they grieve the loss as one of their own. Paul Wayne Patterson's dedication was celebrated by paramedics and policemen and firefighters from across Ontario and well beyond, and rightly so. He and others earned and should earn an Ontario Award for Paramedic Bravery. They do it every single day. So we need such an award; we need to create an award.

In correspondence from AMEMSO, the Association of Municipal Emergency Medical Services of Ontario, I noticed the following relating to how much this kind of tribute means at several levels: "(a) to ... front-line paramedics, whose significant contribution to public health and safety is only beginning to be fully understood and appreciated; (b) to the many Ontarians who have benefited from not only the daily professional work of

paramedics but have been impacted by the acts they perform 'with no concern for personal safety'; and finally, (c) to the pioneers of this relatively new branch of public service whose vision and professionalism charted the course that has brought us here today."

In 2006, William Mann, a KAP paramedic, was on his way from Ottawa to PEI with his fiancée when they encountered heavy snowstorms that led to a deadly car pileup. After their car was repeatedly shaken by 38 or so collisions as car after car and tractor-trailer after trailer slammed into the pileup, having made sure that his fiancée was okay, Mr. Mann got out of his car in a blinding snow squall and proceeded to help other victims of this terrible crash.

Glen Gillies, executive secretary with the Toronto Paramedic Association and public relations director with the Ontario Paramedic Association, who is here today as well, stopped on the side of Highway 401 in Ajax on his way home to pull someone out of a burning car.

Back in March 2008, Patrick Chatelaine, also on his way home, pulled over on the 401 at the site of a car accident and, along with other paramedics, put out a fire and pulled people out of their cars, all before ambulances arrived.

A couple of years ago, Rob Johnstone and his partner rescued people from a burning housing unit because they arrived on the scene before the fire department.

Even in my own area of York region there are several examples. In December 1999, a car crashed into a pond at the Glenway golf club in Newmarket early in the morning. The vehicle, with two passengers, began to submerge in the water. York region EMS paramedics Mark Hinton, Ian Phythian and Shawn McLeish entered the water to attempt to rescue the male and female occupants of the vehicle. Both patients were transported to the hospital. The female succumbed to her injuries, but the male survived. In 2000, all three paramedics received bravery awards from Chief Fantino, along with York region police officers who participated in the rescue.

And in February 2008, just last year, Andrew Liski, York region EMS operations supervisor, attended a scene where two people were trapped in their vehicle following a collision. While paramedics were attending to their patients, Andrew observed live hydro wires unsecured above the scene. He ordered all responders away from the area right away. Seconds later the wires fell, setting the scene on fire.

**1540**

Andrew's quick actions demonstrated the strong relationship with his colleagues and other emergency services. Both EMS and fire responders realized what could have happened had Andrew not made such a knowledgeable decision. Without his leadership and courage, the outcome could have been much, much worse.

In 2008, York region EMS paramedic Andrew Liski was nominated for a Character Hero Award as part of the Character Community Awards for his concern for others. Wouldn't it be nice to give him the award that my colleague Mrs. Van Bommel is recommending?



These are acts that we all believe we would undertake if conditions arose requiring us to do so, but the people I have cited—and certainly Paul Wayne Patterson—made careers and led their lives not just thinking about that but doing so every single day.

These paramedics received federal citations or recognition from their own associations and departments, as well they should have. They deserve recognition from their provincial government as well.

I would like to thank the Patterson family for Paul, as well as all the paramedics with us here today for your service to the people of Ontario. It's about time that your dedication to our province is recognized. I commend my colleague for bringing forth this legislation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** To begin, I'd like to say to my good friend from Thornhill that I didn't have my vital signs measured at the lunch—although I did drop in—and had I, they would be exemplary, so thank you.

I want to begin by saying that everyone in the New Democratic Party speaks with one voice in saying that we're supportive, of course, of this bill. Certainly, this should have been in place long ago.

To the Pattersons, our prayers, our thoughts are with you. You are brave indeed to come down here, and you are brave indeed to endorse this measure and to commemorate, in a living way, what your son's bravery accomplished. Thank you very much for being with us. I know it's tough.

Paramedics are a core feature of our emergency measures services. When you phone 911, they're usually among the very first to arrive at the scene. In my prior life, I was a minister at a United Church and we ran a dinner service, close to St. Joe's, for those who had mental health and addiction issues. I can tell you that many times we would have people who would have seizures etc. We got to know our paramedics quite well at that church.

I believe your service sometimes goes unrewarded by the thank-yous that we all owe you. Hopefully, today, you're going to hear from us what you should be hearing from the entire province of Ontario, which is one big thank-you. This award will go a long way toward accomplishing that.

I had some paramedics come to see me in my riding about another issue that paramedics face—actually, a couple of other issues that paramedics face—that I really wish we would act on as well as this. Number one, all of our front-line workers—police, firefighters and paramedics—are aware that their jobs can be sometimes akin to warfare. They came and told me about this situation where they went to help somebody who was in a knife fight; they just happened to be on the scene. There were knife wounds involved. They pulled people apart—with great danger to themselves because one of these people was high on crack and wielding a knife—only to be jumped, literally, by bystanders. One of the paramedics was beaten up after that. This is a true incident that happened in our city. I was astounded by this.

This same paramedic went on to experience post-traumatic stress symptoms. Post-traumatic stress disorder—PTSD, as it's called—is a real problem among paramedics and all front-line workers, firefighters and police. Among those who sit on the Workmen's Compensation Board, now called the WSIB, there is real concern for those cases as well. We need presumed diagnosis in this province around that kind of disability, as well as others, in the same way that we have, in this House, passed presumed-diagnosis legislation for certain varieties of cancer for firefighters. We need that same kind of legislation to cover paramedics as well. That's something that came out of my office last fall. We had a press conference around this, and brought it forward. We would love to see that bill go forward. It will be tabled shortly.

Another problem these paramedics brought to my attention was significant offload delays. This is the time it takes to get patients from the ambulance into the hospital. These delays are being caused by resource constraints in our hospitals; in short, staffing shortages. In other words, patients are waiting in ambulances. Some delays are 30 minutes; others are many hours. This strains our EMS, it strains our paramedics and it obviously has tremendous impacts on the patients they serve as well.

We're looking at unprecedented hospital cutbacks in the future of this province. We're looking at a situation where many hospitals will not be able to balance their budgets, which they're required to do by law. We need health care funding in this province to make that situation better and, in turn, make the lives of our paramedics better, because they know this is profoundly stressful for those they deal with, for the staff in the hospitals as well for themselves. Those are other areas we need to look at soon.

Certainly, for those who sit in the majority in the government, I would urge that this bill absolutely be passed speedily, but also that we look at the working lives of paramedics in other ways: what they go through, what happens if they have a disability, what happens at WSIB, and particularly post-traumatic stress disorder, where they can be retraumatized just trying to get coverage for something that definitely happened because of their work. And certainly we need to look at those offload delay times and the waits in emergency rooms, which are a plague across our province and which really need to be addressed. That's another area we need to look at as well.

I want to say again, thank you from everyone who has ever worked in a situation like I did in the ministry, anyone who has ever worked in a hospital situation where they come in contact with you often—probably every day—and anyone who works with the public and knows what that's like. Quite frankly, even MPPs know what that's like. We know that it's not always joyous, it's not always easy, and it sometimes is extremely difficult and very often thankless. Certainly Bill 136 will award someone. I would like to see this extended to award everyone in the paramedic community.



**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I want to start with a letter written by Paul Charbonneau, president of AMEMSO, the Association of Municipal Emergency Medical Services of Ontario. I'm going to read a portion of this letter into the record:

"Although AMEMSO sees all members of protective services as everyday heroes, paramedics deserve their rightful consideration for the courageous acts contemplated by this award. The establishment of this award verifies an awareness by our elected officials (and hence our citizens) that their pre-hospital care needs are well placed and held in the highest regard.

"Again, we thank Ms. Maria Van Bommel, MPP, Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, for sponsoring this private member's bill and sincerely urge all members of provincial Parliament to support it.

"Thank you for the opportunity to provide the AMEMSO perspective.

"Yours very truly,

"Paul Charbonneau

"President."

I want to thank the member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex—I usually flip those around; I apologize—for the opportunity, because she is aware of the work I have been doing with firefighters, paramedics and police officers over the years, to bring attention to the fact that this particular group of people does something very few of us do and would want to do; that is, put ourselves in the line of trouble. The natural aversion of the human condition is to leave it. The special gift they have to face that is what we're recognizing today. So I want to thank the member very sincerely for allowing me to say a few words.

I also want to express to you that it's very important for us to acknowledge that the families of these individuals deserve our utmost respect and thanks, because I consider it—I've said this in the past—a large thank-you for the gift of those people. Husbands, wives, spouses, children, grandparents, parents: They know every single day that their loved one is doing a job that they might not return to. We are talking about that today because we have in our presence some wonderful people who offered us that gift. So I want to thank them personally, that each and every day they go to work and they provide us with that very unique and very special gift that they have to put themselves in the line of harm.

1550

I want to thank all of the paramedics in Ontario. I also want to thank personally Charles Longeway—a friend of mine—and Randy Papple, who run the County of Brant Ambulance Service, and the Association of Municipal Emergency Medical Services for providing support for this bill.

In establishing this award for bravery, we will be able to record and immortalize the paramedics who perform exceptional acts of bravery and to show our appreciation and gratitude to the paramedics and their families that we

take so much as a gift. We want to say, in a small way, "Thank you." The bill is important to those who are required to perform these daily acts of courage and bravery and to help their fellow human beings.

Another point that's important to make is that these people don't do this for that purpose. The more I got to learn about who they were, the less they thought it was important. The value that we're adding to this today is an acknowledgment from us to them. They're not looking for it. What they want to know is simply, do we appreciate what they do? This is our opportunity to do that. They don't want to be heroes; they don't want to be seen as heroes. They want to be seen as people who do their job. They take pride in their job and they do it well. That gift is their gift to us. So we're simply saying: "Thank you for the gift of you."

It also serves to go a long way to educate the younger generations on how important these acts of selflessness and caring are and to help them understand and feel the significance of such acts. They are wonderful role models. They go to schools, they go to churches, they go to the basements in those little halls, and they perform lessons free. They tell people of who they are and what they do. They educate. They are great role models for kids to see that these types of acts of selflessness are part of the human condition and make us attached to each other. So I want to give to them a special thank-you for that small gift that they give while they perform their actual job.

If the bill passes, it will honour the services upheld by the paramedics off duty in exceptional acts of service. However, we wish to recognize the contribution that paramedics have made to society while performing their duties, and even, on occasion, to recognize their ultimate sacrifice in the loss of their life. There is no more noteworthy act, such as that of Glen Arnold, the paramedic for the Canadian Armed Forces in Petawawa, or Josh Klukie, the Canadian soldier and paramedic from Thunder Bay, who were killed serving in Afghanistan. And of course, as we've heard before, to Paul Patterson and his entire family, thank you for that gift.

However, death is not the only reason we have to concern ourselves with celebrating this particular bill and, if passed, this award. Paramedics in emergency services are front-line performers. They get in front of the trouble, which means they expose themselves to many risks that we have to include in our society today: biological, chemical, radioactive, AIDS, hepatitis—you name it, they are exposing themselves to it all the time. That is something we should celebrate, the fact that they are willing to do that for us.

I've got about another 25 pages for this speech. I want to make it clear to you that it isn't about writing a speech; it's about making sure that we stand together, unified, as we're hearing with all sides of the House, and that we celebrate our paramedics.

To you, looking you in your eyes: God bless you, and thank you very much for what you do.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. Further debate?



**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** Listening to the debate today, it reminded me of the first time in my life, I think, that I saw an ambulance. I was coming home from school. It was apple-picking time. I must have been maybe six or seven. Somebody had fallen off a ladder in the orchard and they were lying on the ground and complaining about a very sore back. Our house was the closest house with a telephone, and we phoned an ambulance. I can remember the ambulance coming up our road. It was a dirt road in those days; it's Tomkin Road in Mississauga today, but it was a dirt road then. I can still remember the ambulance. It was white. It was a Cadillac; it was one of those antiques that you see in the 1950s. One driver came out and lifted the injured person onto a board and a couple of other fellows helped carry him over to the ambulance and off he went. Unfortunately, that gentleman passed away sometime later, and that would not happen today. It would not happen today with the EMS workers and paramedics. That man would be alive. So it's the kind of improvement to our lifestyle that we thank you for today.

The purposes of awards, of course, are for extraordinary bravery, and paramedics are indeed a very important part of our medical system. They place themselves at peril for the benefit of others and that's a very noble calling indeed.

In my riding of Halton, we have emergency medical services that operate, of course, 24 hours, seven days a week. It's something that people maybe don't think about all the time. In Halton they operate out of 11 stations in Oakville, Burlington, Milton, Georgetown and Acton. This I found very interesting: There are 150 paramedics who serve 450,000 Haltonians and they get over 50,000 calls per year—that's 150 paramedics who respond to that. The paramedics also work closely with the Halton Regional Police Service tactical rescue unit; that also includes a bicycle medical patrol so they can get to areas that an ambulance may not be able to get to very easily.

I used to live fairly close to the Kelso Conservation Area, where there are a couple of rock climbing places. People seem to enjoy climbing up the face of the rock wall on the escarpment that is perhaps 100 to 150 feet high. On a nice, warm day in the summertime you could count on at least one ambulance heading into Kelso, and more often than not it was a rock climber who was either stuck on the face and had to be rescued or he was stuck in a tree into which he fell—he was a lucky one—or he had to be scraped off the ground; most of them just injured badly. I don't ever recall a death in that. It certainly wasn't very pleasant duty for paramedics, but they did it and they did it often in that area.

I'm not sure why it is allowed to take place—rock climbing, that is—but I'm sure the participants of rock climbing find it very exciting. They should have a safety harness on but many of them don't. The paramedics, of course, do their job and rescue these people who have put themselves in harm's way.

As a society, it's a wonderful thing to have people who put themselves in harm's way to help others regardless of how they got there. So we thank you very much

for what you do in your life. I look forward to this bill passing and there being an award for bravery in going beyond the call of duty for paramedics in Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Along with other New Democrats, I want to say I'm very pleased and very honoured to be able to stand in support of Bill 136 and, as with my colleagues in this House, urge its quick passage. Currently, as has probably been said, there are provincial awards for firefighters and police officers, there's a federal government award for paramedics called the Exemplary Service Medal for EMS professionals, but there's no provincial award for paramedics.

Ontarians, through personal experience, know the contribution that paramedics make. They put their lives at risk, as has been said. They're at risk of contracting or being exposed to dangerous diseases, at risk of exposure to dangerous chemicals and, I would say, at times go into situations that are themselves directly dangerous.

I had the opportunity in the last federal election to canvass with a candidate who had previously been a paramedic and it was interesting, as we were going through some apartment buildings, some of which were rougher than others. He said, "When I used to knock on the door, I'd stand aside and not stand right in front of the door," and I thought, "Yeah, now there's an interesting perspective on delivery of service in the public sector." That isn't the way most people think of paramedics and the sorts of dangers they encounter, but that is simply the reality. That is what they go into, and they go into it with a dedication; they go into it with a knowledge of the risks that they're taking on, making the contribution that they do make.

1600

We all know that when you dial 911, you get the firefighters, you get the police, the paramedics. They all come into the same situation, facing similar perils, and it makes sense that they should be recognized in a similar way.

In her explanatory note in the act, Mrs. Van Bommel's bill talks about Paul Patterson. Mr. Patterson, a Chatham-Kent paramedic, was killed when his vehicle rolled over in response to a call.

We shouldn't forget the simple reality that people do put their lives at risk when they do this work. They do it to save our lives; they risk theirs.

There's widespread support for this bill. You can hear it throughout this House. Beyond this, AMEMSO, the Association of Municipal Emergency Medical Services of Ontario, has made a statement: "The establishment of this award verifies an awareness by our elected officials and hence our citizens that their pre-hospital care needs are well placed and held in the highest regard." OPSEU, which represents many EMS workers, has voiced their support for this bill. Other supporters include: Thames EMS, Middlesex and Elgin; Essex-Windsor EMS; Lennox and Addington EMS; region of Waterloo; Ontario EMS chiefs' association; county of Frontenac.



This bill is a good piece of work. I have to say that the member has previously brought in very practical private members' bills that I was pleased to support, and I'm very pleased today to support this bill as well.

To those who are here representing emergency measures paramedics, I want to say personally that I thank you for all that you've done, and I hope that this bill helps, in part, in recognizing all that you've contributed to our society.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I again want to join my colleagues in acknowledging the effort undertaken by the member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex. Undertaking these private member's bills—there are many that come to our offices and our constituencies, and we all know the effort that's required to undertake this kind of initiative. For her to do this is very much appreciated. It is something that she has undertaken and has brought to this House's attention, and it's something that obviously seems to have support. I think that the work beyond the private members' hour has to continue. I just wish her the best of luck in pursuing this, to make people aware of the contributions that paramedics make.

As we all have been aware, these are the first responders, sometimes underestimated or underappreciated, and I think that's sometimes just because we don't take time to evaluate what they've done and what they do. I know the situation sometimes in rural Ontario, but I can imagine the role of paramedics in urban Ontario or downtown Toronto. I see some incredible risks taken by paramedics trying to get through traffic in rush hour. They must risk their life 20 times in one call, trying to avoid traffic gridlock and get through lights and turns and trucks, and they're doing this most often in speed to save a life. I guess if you counted the number of lives they have saved, the number of people who have been diverted from long-term illnesses because the paramedics got there in time—and I know those thresholds, and for them the 30-second thresholds are critical.

I was very impressed a couple of years ago when I had the pleasure to work with Garrie Wright from Toronto EMS services. I worked with Garrie on trying to bring the AEDs, automated external defibrillators, into public places and to educate people on the value of having AEDs, the portable heart defibrillators, in hockey arenas, in this building. We finally, with Garrie's help, got one in this building. It took two years to get one in this building. With Garrie's passion, we went around the province trying to get people to support these heart-saving devices that are now becoming more and more commonplace. This is the work of an EMS professional, Garrie Wright, who is still doing good work with the city of Toronto.

Anyway, I was very impressed with the passion and the professionalism of paramedics in getting to know a lot of them with the portable heart defibrillators. It was a private member's bill that got introduced about seven or eight years ago, which eventually was passed, and now we have a program in Ontario where AEDs are going into public buildings. In fact, we should ensure, wherever

we are in our ridings, that there are AEDs in our community centres. They should be in our schools, they should be in our workplaces, because that is a linkage between the paramedic and the life-saving 30 seconds that could be critical in saving someone who is suffering from cardiac arrest. I know the AEDs have already saved over a dozen lives at the Woodbine racetrack. At the Toronto international airport, they've saved a number of lives already, not to mention in hockey arenas.

The paramedics deserve this recognition, and I think it's incumbent upon us as MPPs to let our government and our fellow colleagues know that this is something that should go forward. It's something that recognizes their risk and achievement and the security they give people across Ontario.

Maybe sometimes we take these essential services for granted. They are always there, and that's why sometimes we don't appreciate what it takes to get to the spot. Then, as someone mentioned before—I think the member for Toronto-Danforth mentioned it—when you go to a door, you don't know what you're going to find inside that door, inside that apartment or house, whether the person has some contagious disease, whether that person is violent. The person could be armed. There are all kinds of risks that take place. So it is not an automatic phone call and you just turn on the paramedic. There are all kinds of variables there that they have to deal with, and that is why they have to have the greatest professional expertise. They have to be beyond professional. They have to be passionate, and that's what I found about most paramedics I've met: They really love their work, and they are willing to risk their lives for others who are in danger. If they don't deserve a medal, I don't know who does deserve one.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Mrs. Van Bommel, you have up to two minutes to respond.

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** I want to thank the members for Thornhill, Parkdale-High Park, Brant, Halton, Toronto-Danforth and Eglinton-Lawrence for their supportive words. I also want to mention that we had a letter from Paul Charbonneau, who is with us here today. I've also received a number of e-mails and phone calls of support from emergency medical services, police services, fire services, individual paramedics, their families and friends.

I want to just read one from James Kang, who is the director of Halton region EMS. He writes: "I have reviewed Bill 136 and am in full support of recognizing those paramedics who have lost their lives or put themselves in danger while providing pre-hospital patient care to those in need.... Bill 136 ... is long overdue."

I want to also talk about the fact that Paul Patterson paid the ultimate price. Paul was a hero, but first of all, he was a paramedic and he placed the lives of others ahead of his own. He was a dedicated paramedic who garnered the respect of his colleagues as an exemplary individual. Paul is one of many paramedics, including my own nephew, Jeff Millar, a paramedic in the Renfrew region, who go above and beyond the call to serve the public.

I want to just take a moment to thank those who have done the legwork to bring this bill to fruition: the Patterson family and Bruce Krauter; James Berry in my Toronto office, who led the charge and was joined recently by Rachelle MacDougall; Tracey Dorman and Marie Baker in my constituency office; and Chris Wernham of legislative counsel, who scripted the legislation proper.

Before I finish, I want to just read the prayer of the Association of Municipal Emergency Medical Services of Ontario, with your permission, Speaker:

God grant me the strength to deliver emergency medical care,

With skillful hands and a compassionate heart.

Give me the courage and ability to render my professional skills,

When called upon and lives are on the line.

Help to guide these hands with love and care as I bring new life into this world.

Let me ease the suffering of others from day to day.

And finally, to help me accept my fate and the fate of others,

With a clear mind and an open heart.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

#### POPE JOHN PAUL II DAY ACT, 2009

##### LOI DE 2009 SUR LE JOUR DU PAPE JEAN-PAUL II

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We will first deal with ballot item number 67, standing in the name of Mr. Klees.

Mr. Klees has moved second reading Bill 25, An Act to proclaim Pope John Paul II Day. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I would ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Is it agreed that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly? So ordered.

#### CURRICULUM

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We will now deal with ballot item number 68, or private member's notice of motion number 76, standing in the name of Mr. Kwinter. Is it the pleasure of the House that that motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

#### ONTARIO AWARD FOR PARAMEDIC BRAVERY ACT, 2009

##### LOI DE 2009 SUR LE PRIX DE BRAVOURE DES AUXILIAIRES MÉDICAUX DE L'ONTARIO

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Mrs. Van Bommel has moved second reading of Bill 136, An Act to provide for the Ontario Award for Paramedic Bravery. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** I would ask that this bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Is it agreed that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy? Agreed. So ordered.

All matters relating to private members' public business having been completed, I do now call orders of the day.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I move adjournment of the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until Monday next at 10:30 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1613.*



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.  
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Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller  
Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum  
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Aggelonitis, Sophia (LIB)	Hamilton Mountain	
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
<b>Arnott, Ted (PC)</b>	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
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Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Attorney General / Procureur général
<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)</b>	London West / London-Ouest	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough–Sud-Ouest	
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Broten, Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
<b>Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Economic Development / Ministre du Développement économique
<b>Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
<b>Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
<b>Carroll, Hon. / L'hon. M. Aileen (LIB)</b>	Barrie	Minister of Culture / Ministre de la Culture Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
<b>Crozier, Bruce (LIB)</b>	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)</b>	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough–Centre	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
<b>Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)</b>	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
<b>Horwath, Andrea (NDP)</b>	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Carol (LIB)	Huron–Bruce	
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Murdoch, Bill (IND)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)</b>	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)</b>	Scarborough—Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres
		Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches—East York	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)</b>	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of International Trade and Investment / Ministre du Commerce international et de l'Investissement
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London—Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland—Quinte West	
Runciman, Robert W. (PC)	Leeds—Grenville	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)</b>	Nipissing	Minister of Tourism / Ministre du Tourisme
		Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
<b>Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Deputy Premier / Vice-premier ministre
		Minister of Energy and Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Infrastructure
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton—Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga—Erindale	Minister of Small Business and Consumer Services / Ministre des Petites Entreprises et des Services aux consommateurs
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	
<b>Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Perth—Wellington	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
<b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>	Simcoe—Grey	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener—Waterloo	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
		Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

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Garfield Dunlop, Kevin Daniel Flynn  
Tim Hudak, Amrit Mangat  
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## **Skills training**

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti .....4910

## **International Mother Language Day**

Mr. Reza Moridi .....4910

## **Ontario economy**

Mr. Joe Dickson .....4911

## **REPORTS BY COMMITTEES / RAPPORTS DES COMITÉS**

### **Standing Committee on Public Accounts**

Mr. Ernie Hardeman .....4911

Debate adjourned .....4911

## **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI**

### **Visual Fire Alarm System Act, 2009, Bill 148,**

**Mr. Arthurs / Loi de 2009 sur les systèmes  
d'alarme-incendie à affichage visuel, projet de loi  
148, M. Arthurs**

First reading agreed to .....4911

Mr. Wayne Arthurs .....4911

### **Inactive Cemeteries Protection Act, 2009, Bill 149,**

**Mr. Brownell / Loi de 2009 sur la protection des  
cimetières inactifs, projet de loi 149, M. Brownell**

First reading agreed to .....4911

Mr. Jim Brownell .....4912

### **1173931 Ontario Limited Act, 2009, Bill Pr21,**

**Mr. Rinaldi**

First reading agreed to .....4912

## **MOTIONS**

### **Committee membership**

Hon. Brad Duguid .....4912

Motion agreed to .....4912

## **PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS**

### **Non-profit housing**

Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....4912

### **Child custody**

Mr. Jim Brownell .....4912

### **Motorcycle safety**

Mr. Ernie Hardeman .....4913

### **Firearms control**

Mr. Tony Ruprecht .....4913

## **Health care**

Mr. Robert Bailey .....4913

## **Pope John Paul II**

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti .....4913

## **Assistance to farmers**

Mr. Ernie Hardeman .....4914

## **Tom Longboat**

Mr. Mike Colle .....4914

## **Pope John Paul II**

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti .....4914

## **Justice system**

Mr. Tony Ruprecht .....4914

## **Bathurst Heights Adult Learning Centre**

Mr. Mike Colle .....4915

## **PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS / AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉS**

### **Pope John Paul II Day Act, 2009, Bill 25, Mr. Klees / Loi de 2009 sur le Jour du Pape Jean-Paul II, projet de loi 25, M. Klees**

Mr. Frank Klees .....4915

Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....4917

Mrs. Laura Albanese .....4918

Ms. Lisa MacLeod .....4919

Mr. Tony Ruprecht .....4920

Mr. Frank Klees .....4921

## **Curriculum**

Mr. Monte Kwinter .....4922

Mr. Peter Shurman .....4923

Mr. Peter Tabuns .....4924

Mr. Mike Colle .....4926

Ms. Lisa MacLeod .....4927

Mr. Wayne Arthurs .....4928

Mrs. Liz Sandals .....4928

Mr. Monte Kwinter .....4929

### **Ontario Award for Paramedic Bravery Act, 2009, Bill 136, Mrs. Van Bommel / Loi de 2009 sur le Prix de bravoure des auxiliaires médicaux de l'Ontario, projet de loi 136, Mme Van Bommel**

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel .....4929

Mr. Peter Shurman .....4930

Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....4932

Mr. Dave Levac .....4933

Mr. Ted Chudleigh .....4934

Mr. Peter Tabuns .....4934

Mr. Mike Colle .....4935

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel .....4935



**Pope John Paul II Day Act, 2009, Bill 25, Mr. Klees /  
Loi de 2009 sur le Jour du Pape Jean-Paul II,  
projet de loi 25, M. Klees**

Second reading agreed to..... 4936

**Curriculum**

Motion agreed to..... 4936

**Ontario Award for Paramedic Bravery Act, 2009,  
Bill 136, Mrs. Van Bommel / Loi de 2009 sur le  
Prix de bravoure des auxiliaires médicaux de  
l'Ontario, projet de loi 136, Mme Van Bommel**

Second reading agreed to..... 4936

## CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Thursday 19 February 2009 / Jeudi 19 février 2009

### ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

#### **Family Statute Law Amendment Act, 2009, Bill 133, Mr. Bentley / Loi de 2009 modifiant des lois en ce qui concerne le droit de la famille, projet de loi 133, M. Bentley**

Hon. Christopher Bentley.....	4889
Mrs. Christine Elliott.....	4891
Mr. Peter Kormos.....	4892
Mr. Jeff Leal.....	4892
Mr. Ted Chudleigh.....	4892
Hon. Christopher Bentley.....	4893
Mrs. Christine Elliott.....	4893
Mr. Peter Kormos.....	4897
Mrs. Maria Van Bommel .....	4897
Ms. Lisa MacLeod .....	4897
Mr. Dave Levac.....	4898
Mrs. Christine Elliott.....	4898
Second reading debate deemed adjourned .....	4898

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Peter Kormos.....	4898
The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters).....	4898

### ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

#### **Ontario economy**

Mr. Robert W. Runciman.....	4898
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	4899

#### **Ontario economy**

Mr. Ted Chudleigh.....	4899
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	4900

#### **Automotive industry**

Mr. Peter Tabuns.....	4900
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	4900

#### **Green power generation**

Mr. Peter Tabuns.....	4901
Hon. George Smitherman.....	4901

#### **Ontario economy**

Mr. Tim Hudak .....	4902
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	4902

#### **Post-secondary education**

Mr. Rosario Marchese.....	4902
Hon. John Milloy .....	4903

#### **Ontario economy**

Mr. Bob Delaney .....	4903
Hon. Sandra Pupatello.....	4903

#### **Minimum wage**

Mr. Robert Bailey.....	4904
Hon. Peter Fonseca.....	4904

#### **Correctional facilities**

Mr. Peter Kormos.....	4904
Hon. Rick Bartolucci.....	4904

#### **Dialysis**

Mr. Reza Moridi.....	4905
Hon. David Caplan.....	4905

#### **Hospital funding**

Mr. Frank Klees .....	4905
Hon. George Smitherman.....	4905

#### **Minister's expenses**

Mr. Paul Miller.....	4906
Hon. Sandra Pupatello.....	4906

#### **Black History Month**

Mr. Mike Colle.....	4907
Hon. M. Aileen Carroll .....	4907

#### **Minister's expenses**

Mr. Robert W. Runciman.....	4907
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	4908
Hon. Sandra Pupatello.....	4908

#### **Municipalities**

Ms. Andrea Horwath .....	4908
Hon. Jim Watson .....	4908

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

#### **Heritage Week**

Mrs. Julia Munro .....	4908
------------------------	------

#### **Gérald "Chuck" Charlebois**

Mr. Jim Brownell .....	4909
------------------------	------

#### **Pesticides**

Mr. Toby Barrett .....	4909
------------------------	------

#### **Child care**

Ms. Andrea Horwath .....	4909
--------------------------	------

#### **Family Day**

Mr. Phil McNeely.....	4909
-----------------------	------

#### **Health care**

Mr. Robert Bailey.....	4910
------------------------	------

*Continued on inside back cover*



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## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 39<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Monday 23 February 2009

Lundi 23 février 2009

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 23 February 2009

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 23 février 2009

*The House met at 1030.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by a moment of silence for inner thought and personal reflection.

*Prayers.*

### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order today regarding the announcement of the budget date. The finance minister had ample opportunities last week to announce the actual date of the budget in this House, while all of the members were assembled. You would know, Mr. Speaker, from presiding in the chair during question period, that members of the PC caucus asked many budget-related questions. Instead, breaking from the custom and tradition of this chamber, he chose to announce the date of the budget in a media scrum on Thursday, February 19. This was followed later in the day by a media advisory. The end result of these announcements is that most members of this assembly learned from the media, rather than the finance minister himself, the actual date of the delivery of the budget in this Legislature.

In your ruling of February 18, regarding the member from Oshawa's concerns, you said, "... but I will say to the Minister that it is less about the timing of the announcement outside the House yesterday and more about the fact that the announcement did take place outside the House."

In the spirit of this ruling, I ask, on behalf of my colleagues in the PC caucus, that you apply this precedent to the matter at hand. I also ask that you consider in your ruling the spirit of democracy under which the majority should rule. An overwhelming majority of our 107 elected members were not present at the media scrum to learn information to which they are entitled as MPPs.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The member opposite is correct. They did ask a variety of questions; they didn't ask the date of the budget. I went out to scrum and was asked what the date of the budget is, and we responded. This is not, in my view, a point of order. Budget dates have been announced outside of the House on many occasions, including the Magna budget announcement, which was done outside of the House, as the budget was—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** That plant is still open, Mr. Hudak, and you shouldn't be speculating on something like that. This is neither a point of order—it just repre-

sents an opposition that's divided, doesn't have its act together and has no plan for the economy.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order: I would just take note that last week, you did rule in this House about an announcement that was made through a question to the Minister of Infrastructure that was on the opposite side of the point of order that the opposition House leader is making today. I think they should actually determine which way they would like it.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I thank the honourable members for their comments. I anticipated that this issue may arise today and had the opportunity to confer with the table this morning prior to coming to question period. I will continue to remind members of the statement I made last week and that previous Speakers have made.

In the discussions we had this morning, the focus of that statement had been on a policy announcement being made outside of this chamber and those questions being raised within the chamber. In this instance it was the specifics of a date that were announced. I'm not going to take any further action but I do appreciate the member's bringing the issue forward.

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I'd like to introduce to the assembly today, repatriated back to the city of Thunder Bay—stolen back from Burlington—the relatively new city manager, Tim Commisso.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'm pleased to introduce the representatives of the township of Georgian Bay and some members of my constituency; so with that, I'll share this with Mr. Miller. They are all attending the ROMA conference. I'd like to introduce Mayor Jim Walden and his wife, Anita; the chief administrative officer, Brenda Black; and the public works supervisor, Rick McMaster, and his wife, Kim. Again, they're all attending the ROMA conference. Thank you very much, and welcome.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I would like to introduce three representatives of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union who are here with us today: Brenda Wall, Roger Couvrette and Candy Lindsay. Welcome.

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I would like to introduce the president of Tourism London, Brad Rice, and also the acting director, John Winston, just here in the gallery.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I'm very pleased to be able to welcome the parents of Rachel Trow—Betty Fallis Trow,

her father, Phil, her grandmother Jacky—and friends Ashley Hopper and Liz Westlake. Welcome to the assembly.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I'm delighted today to be able to introduce representatives of the GRCA, the Grand River Conservation Authority, the best conservation authority in Ontario. We have with us today Paul Emerson, Alan Dale, Joe Farwell and Lorrie Minshall in the west gallery. Welcome.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I am delighted to introduce the members of the Black Education Awareness Committee from the Children's Aid Society of Toronto. They're joining us in the public gallery today. Their names are Tre Bailey, Teka White, Tyler Lloyd, Trina Amin, Stephanie Bedard-Dempster, Melanie Bedard-Dempster, Asher Khan, Brenda Akumu, Julia Hejazi, Crystal Adams, Tyler Bryant, Bernard Dobrovolski, Clunis Johnson, Merle Fleming, Moy Bromfield, Patricia Malcolm, Naomi Singh, Denise Anderson, Sophia Mazurek, Clayton Greaves, Charmaine Hylton, David Henry and Michael Bowe. Welcome to all of you.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I'm very pleased to introduce Irena and Jas Rosic, the parents of page Andrej Rosic from Mississauga—Streetsville.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** It's a big day in the Legislature today: it's Tourism Day at Queen's Park today. I'm delighted to introduce, in our galleries here, the president of the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario, Bill Allen, as well as a variety of board members and members of the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario: Terry Mundell, with the Greater Toronto Hotel Association; Tim West, the chair of the TIAO, and with the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs; Michelle Saunders, with the Ontario Restaurant, Hotel and Motel Association; David Hornstein, the past chair of Tourism Sault Ste. Marie, and with Dynamic Hospitality; Garrett Klassen, the vice-president of the Federation of Bed and Breakfast Accommodation and the owner of Three Bears B&B in Elora; Beth Potter, the executive director of the Ontario Private Campground Association; Bruce Gravel, the president of the Ontario Accommodation Association; Nancy Adamo, president and owner of the Hockley Valley Resort; Susan Cudahy, general manager of the Waterloo Regional Tourism Marketing Corp.; and John Winston, of Tourism London.

I would welcome all of our members to the reception this afternoon at 5 o'clock in the dining room, on behalf of the tourism industry.

1040

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** I'd like to introduce the mayor of Brooke-Alvinston, Don McGugan, and his wife, Ann. They're here for the ROMA conference, and they're from my riding of Lambton—Kent—Middlesex.

**Mr. Bruce Crozier:** I want to introduce somebody who is not exactly a visitor here today, but new to the world, and that is Kate Robin Crozier, who came into the world this morning at seven pounds, five ounces.

*Applause.*

**Mr. Bruce Crozier:** Mother Jolean, father David, brothers Benjamin and Cowan are doing well, as well as grandma and grandpa.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I want to take this opportunity to welcome, in the east public gallery today, students from Immaculate Heart of Mary School in Scarborough, and a special welcome to my brother Joe and an extra-special welcome to my nephew Nicholas, who is here today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

#### PREMIER'S ATTENDANCE

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: We were told that the Premier would be in question period today, and we note that he is not. We have not been informed that he would be missing today's question period.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Government House leader?

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** Sorry, I am unaware of any assurance that the Premier would be here this morning.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'm going to go back to the government House leader. I see a note arriving.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** Thank you. As I should have known, because I was there this morning, the Premier is at OGRA/ROMA this morning. I believe the opposition was aware that he was speaking at OGRA/ROMA this morning.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** With respect, it makes the functioning of us holding the government to account far better when the House leader or members opposite inform the opposition when ministers will not be available. We were notified, for example, that Minister Best would be away, that Minister Bryant would be late and that Minister Bradley had a commitment later in question period—Mr. Bryant has, in fact, arrived. We would appreciate the respect due to the official opposition by letting us know when the Premier is not going to be here in question period.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I thank the members for rising on the point of order. As much as some of you may wish, there is nothing that allows me, as Speaker, to compel the Premier or a minister to be here at question period. I just ask that, as has been done in the past, courtesy be extended about members who will or will not be in attendance.

It is now time for oral questions.

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

##### ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** In the absence of the Premier, I will direct to the Minister of Finance. Minister, while other Premiers were announcing—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Member from Niagara West—Glanbrook—and I appreciate the efforts of



the armchair Speakers on the other side—we have the custom within this Chamber of not making reference to people being or not being here during questions.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I have a question to the Minister of Finance. While other Premiers were announcing economic stimulus plans, Premier McGuinty visited your hometown—a community beset by the highest unemployment rate in all of Canada and plunging real-estate values—to speak to the chamber of commerce, where he gave this deep economic insight: “We’re going to be okay.” He topped that on November 27, 2008, when he told Ontario families worried about their jobs or their ability to pay their mortgage to go out and buy a fridge to kick-start the economy.

Minister, can you inform the Legislature how many jobs were lost since the Premier dispensed this pearl of economic wisdom?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Well, having been at the speech, I can tell you that the Premier received a standing ovation at the end of his speech. The Premier reminded the Windsor Chamber of Commerce that three weeks earlier, the city of Windsor had received \$21 million in infrastructure money, which that member voted against. The Premier reminded the audience that when Saskatchewan announced a \$500-million infrastructure program for 2007-08, we did \$9.9 billion. When Nova Scotia released its economic update, they said they’d wait until after the federal budget to address issues; we did a full fall update.

President Obama is going to speak about the American economy tomorrow and his budget for a fiscal year that began last October. This government is the only government that has introduced budgets and fall statements on time, before the beginning of fiscal years. Our government’s record on infrastructure—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** How soon the minister forgets. He promised us an early budget only a few weeks ago; now we find out it’s the last Thursday of the fiscal year. I’m here to say that the minister probably mistook a standing ovation in Windsor for the growing number of people lined up at the unemployment office down the streets of his home community.

Minister, when the PCs were in office, our pro-job-creation policies helped create 1.2 million jobs in the province of Ontario, a record that stands to this day. Since Dalton McGuinty talked about going out and buying fridges, durable goods sales have plummeted in Ontario and 105,000 Ontarians lost their jobs. What Ontario families worried about their mortgage and jobs want to see is a leader in the Premier’s office. Instead, they’re seeing a deer caught in the headlights.

When are we going to see some action to revive our economy, or are you looking for more jobs as Dalton McGuinty roadkill?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** After the Premier gave his speech to the Windsor chamber, we attended the Ford re-training centre, which this government set up to help displaced workers. The Conservative members who laughed

about unemployed people in Windsor ought to be ashamed of themselves. We set up a skills training program—\$1.5 billion—that is helping unemployed people across Ontario. That member and his party voted against it. The one thing unemployed workers in Windsor need today is earlier and more access to employment insurance. His friends in the Conservative Party in Ottawa said no to that at the very time they should have been endorsing it.

This government has laid out a plan to deal with the world financial crisis; that party is nothing but hot air and smoke. We’ll continue to speak for the unemployed in Windsor and right across Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I don’t know what the finance minister himself is smoking. What we’re laughing at over here is a Premier confronted by families worried about their jobs and mortgages, and they hear the Premier telling them to go out and buy a fridge. They hear a Premier say, “Steel yourselves.” They hear a Premier say, “Don’t worry; we’re going to be okay.” What a bunch of horse feathers. They want to see a leader in the Premier’s office, not some third-rate inspirational speaker.

Minister, PC policies of lowering the tax and the red tape burden helped create some 1.2 million jobs in the province of Ontario. What you claim to create in five years, we created in one. I want to see you get off your duff, bring forward a budget, help businesses create jobs and bring this province out of the have-not status that you dragged it into.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The member opposite must be missing the world financial crisis and what’s going on. To compare the situation to the late 1990s is an absolute absurdity.

But let’s see what the Tories have said about job hiring. On the weekend, John Tory laid out his sixth five-point plan. In fact, it’s a three-point plan when you look at it. In it, he very clearly says that government shouldn’t be spending on stimulus to create jobs, that we shouldn’t be hiring in the government. We reject that. We reject your leader, and we reject your policies. I guess they had a bit of a celebration of Mike Harris last weekend, and let me tell you, we reject that. We reject that whole ideology.

Our government has invested in infrastructure. Our government has invested in training. Our government has invested in targeted tax cuts. Our government has invested in red tape reduction. That member and his party have no plan, no vision—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. The member from Kitchener–Waterloo.

## RURAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** My question is for the Minister of Health, in the absence of the Premier.

*Interjections.*



**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Do I need to remind the member again about making references to attendance?

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's just that we weren't informed.

Minister of Health, there is growing fear and trepidation in rural Ontario about your government's clandestine plans to close emergency rooms and beds and eliminate services. In fact, the rural mayors are in Toronto this week to ask you about your policy on rural hospitals. Despite your Premier's promise not to cut services, we now know about your plans to close the emergency rooms in Port Colborne and elsewhere. Can you tell the people in rural Ontario: What is your plan for rural health?

1050

**Hon. David Caplan:** I thank the member for the question in the absence of the Leader of the Opposition. I had a very constructive—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** There is a Leader of the Opposition who is here, and the same reminder that I just gave to the honourable member I give to the Minister of Health. These silly games need to come to an end.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** He's a silly person.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Halton will withdraw the comment that he just made, please.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** Withdraw.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister of Health.

**Hon. David Caplan:** I can tell the House and the member opposite that today I had a very good and constructive meeting with the mayor of Port Colborne, in fact outlining the various steps that this government is taking relating to strengthening investments in health care, in Niagara in particular, but also right across the province. So far, \$62 million invested in small and rural hospitals since 2003; more than 130 foreign-trained doctors are today working in—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** To the health minister again: The residents of Lindsay and surrounding communities are also concerned about the possibility that there will be cuts made—in particular, the cut to the mental health unit at Ross Memorial Hospital. We've seen this happen at Rouge Valley. I ask the minister today: Will you guarantee that the mental health unit at Ross Memorial Hospital will not be closed or any services reduced?

**Hon. David Caplan:** I don't know where the member comes up with these scaremongering tactics. The only people who have closed facilities are that member and her colleagues opposite when they were in the privilege of serving as the government of Ontario. In fact, they cut and closed thousands of beds across the province. They fired 6,000 nurses. Coming into office, in their first two years, they cut 7.5% from health care spending right

away. And it gets worse, because it is the avowed position of the member opposite and her colleagues to cut another \$3 billion in health care funding.

I say that Ontarians have rejected that approach. Ontarians want an approach which encourages more investment, as we have seen: a 37% increase in health care spending under this government, and we're going to continue to hire more nurses, hire more doctors, expand services and, in fact, provide better quality of care—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Maybe the member opposite would like to read the editorial in the Toronto Star from Saturday about what happened 20 years ago to the Peterson government and the emergency room crisis. I say to you today, Mr. Minister: Letters are flooding in from all over rural Ontario. They refer to the decimation of our public health system. I've got them right here.

I would say to you: Are you today prepared to share with the people in this province, the mayors and the councillors who are gathered here for the first time in about six years, what your plan is for rural Ontario hospitals?

**Hon. David Caplan:** As I indicated in the answer to the first question, so far, to date, \$62 million invested in small and rural hospitals; more than 130 foreign-trained doctors currently working in underserved communities; 44 family health teams, in service to over 1,000 rural Ontarians; \$1 million for new tuition fees for new rural nurses; and 19 new community health centres and satellites in rural communities. That stands in stark contrast to the efforts and the record of the member opposite, who cut services in those communities, who supported the work of the Health Services Restructuring Commission as they went from community to community closing and slashing their services. This member fired nurses. Her Premier called them hula-hoop workers.

This government is hiring more nurses. This government is having more doctors in—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** New question.

## CHILD PROTECTION

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** My question is for the Deputy Premier.

The Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth tells us that 90 children a year are dying in Ontario's child welfare system. The children and youth advocate further says that this number of deaths in Ontario's child welfare system is too high by any standard.

My question is this: How does the McGuinty government explain the deaths of 90 of the most vulnerable children each year in Ontario's child welfare system under the McGuinty government's watch?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** To the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I want to start by thanking the advocate for his work.



Every death of a child is a tragedy. These 90 deaths are 90 separate tragedies. I can assure the member opposite that we take them very, very seriously. We work with the chief coroner every time there is a death reviewed. We take it very seriously and make sure that we take the steps necessary to prevent future deaths.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** The minister says that the McGuinty government takes this situation seriously. This has been going on for some time. The McGuinty government has presided over this for five and a half years. It means that more than 500 children have died in Ontario's child welfare system while the McGuinty government says that it takes the problem seriously and is doing what it can to address it. How can that be? How can this be happening every year—90 of the most vulnerable children dying? How does the McGuinty government explain five and a half years of inaction while 90 of the most vulnerable children are dying a year?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I would urge the member opposite to carefully read the pediatric death review committee report. I think it would be a mistake that none of us would want to make to interpret these results differently than our coroner has reported to us.

Let me just tell you about some of the changes that we have taken as a result of the pediatric death review committee report. One of the big factors when it comes to infant death is sleeping arrangements. When my children were young, we put them on their tummies with toys and stuffed animals. That is no longer understood to be the best way to put a child to sleep, so now we train child protection workers and parents so that they understand that the safest way to put a child to sleep is on their back, without any of the toys. That is making a difference—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** The fact remains that under this government's watch, 90 of the most vulnerable children a year, children who've been taken under the control of child welfare agencies, are dying.

The child and youth advocate makes it very clear: He says that most of these deaths were preventable. These are suicides. Some of them are homicides. Some of them are situations involving children between the ages of 12 and 18 years old which clearly could have been prevented.

How does the McGuinty government justify presiding over this situation year after year after year while the most vulnerable children are dying under your watch and under your control?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Let me repeat: We take each death very, very seriously. When we think about kids who die from suicide, that is something we take extremely seriously. That's why, in the support that we are providing for crown wards and kids in care, we take their mental health very seriously. We've funded community partnerships between CASs and mental health agencies.

I'm not going to, for one minute, pretend that everything is perfect. The number of deaths of kids in care has actually remained constant since 1991.

We are continuing to make improvements. Last week, I was with the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, announcing yet another step in our transformation of child welfare to improve outcomes for kids in care.

These kids are our kids. These kids belong to all of us—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

1100

## CHILD PROTECTION

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** The McGuinty government says that you're doing all you can to prevent this, but the child and youth advocate sees it quite differently.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** To the same minister, Speaker.

In fact, just this past December, the child and youth advocate had to go to court and fight the McGuinty government to gain access to an investigation report from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, your ministry. The child advocate's report makes it clear that this kind of stonewalling by the McGuinty government is repeated and repeated.

Tell me: if the McGuinty government is doing all that it can to protect these children, why is the McGuinty government continuing to stonewall the efforts of the child and youth advocate, who is only trying to do his job and protect these children?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm very happy to be able to actually report to the member opposite that in fact a protocol agreement has been signed between the advocate and our ministry so that the information will flow. We obviously have to respect privacy considerations. When we made the office an independent office, which I think was the right thing to do, we had to ensure that privacy considerations were addressed. In fact, today the advocate is meeting with members of my ministry staff to ensure a smooth implementation of that protocol.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Today, after the child advocate releases his report, after the child advocate has had to go to court to fight the McGuinty government, after 500 children have died under the McGuinty government's control, suddenly the McGuinty government says, "Oh, we have to get together and talk." But this is not the first time that the child advocate has made these points. To quote him, "These are obviously very critical documents for the understanding of the events leading to the death of the child or youth, and entirely necessary for the work of the advocacy office."

Why again, when these documents are needed, when the child advocate is simply trying to do his job for this Legislature and protect these children, is the McGuinty government doing everything it can to inhibit the work of the child advocate?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I just completely reject the premise of the leader of the third party. My ministry



shares the concern for kids that the advocate exemplifies. I have tremendous respect for the work he does. I have tremendous respect for the person he is. His background speaks volumes about his concern for the most vulnerable children. I think he was a brilliant choice as a child and youth advocate for this Legislature.

We are working very hard to work with him. As I said, today he is meeting with my ministry officials to talk about the flow of information. We had to work hard to reach that protocol agreement, but it's important that the privacy of children and youth is respected as we go through this.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** More words from the McGuinty government, but they're just words. This is what the Premier had to say a year ago: "We accept our responsibility to do more to help the poor, and poor children in particular. If it's not simply a moral imperative, it's a matter of enlightened self-interest. If our children do well, then we all stand to do well."

But here's what the child advocate had to say yesterday. He says he is "struggling ... to build working relationships within the ministry itself." He says of the McGuinty government, "It's hard to tell what is smoke and mirrors and what isn't," because you continue to try to inhibit him from doing his work.

I say again, this is not about whether the child advocate is credible or whether he's a good person. This is about the McGuinty government's failure: 500 children in five and a half years, and the child advocate says you continue to do all you can to stonewall his work and make it difficult for him to protect children. Why?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I would suggest that the member opposite actually look at the report. It's dated December 31, 2008, and he says that as of this writing, we are working on reaching that protocol. In fact, we have reached that protocol, and we are implementing that protocol as we speak.

I think it's important to note that according to the coroner, the death in most cases was not a preventable death by the CAS, and the CAS involvement was not a factor in the deaths. That is not to say that any death is an acceptable death, but I think it's important what you infer from this report.

I also think it's important to contrast our position with the position of the NDP. When you were in office, you cut CAS staff. In fact, the number of CAS staff has gone up by 20% since we were elected, and that is because we take our—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

#### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Frank Klees:** My question is to the Premier, and it relates to a question that I asked him last week. It deals with the issue of downloading provincial health care costs to the municipalities.

York region passed a measure that adds \$12 million for hospital capital costs to the local tax base for property taxpayers. John Taylor, the regional councillor for York region and a former Liberal candidate, said that this is essentially "voluntary downloading," raising the fact—and he said specifically—that "this is really a provincial responsibility."

So I ask once again, on behalf of taxpayers in York region: Why is the provincial government downloading essential hospital costs to taxpayers in York region?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** I have utmost respect for my honourable friend, and indeed for John Taylor as well, but I think they misunderstand some elements of history on the file of community contributions for purposes of health care capital construction. When Elizabeth Witmer—when the member from Kitchener-Waterloo—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** —was Minister of Health, the funding relationship on capital projects was either 50-50—provincial, community—or, at the highest, 70% provincial, 30% community. We've raised that to 90%.

There is, inherent in the construction of new hospitals, a recognition that communities should and must be involved. In the case of York region, rather than relying only on contributions from individuals and businesses in the community, the region has decided to take a leadership position to raise those resources through the tax base. I see that as leadership. There are other models and mechanisms, but at all times there's a community—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** East Gwillimbury Mayor Jamie Young agrees with York regional councillor and former Liberal candidate John Taylor that what is happening in York region is fundamentally wrong. The fact is that this government slapped a new health care tax levy on people across the province, including people in York region, under the guise that it would pay for growing health care costs. We know full well that this government has abandoned fast-growing communities because they are not funding their rightful amount of costs.

In the past, yes, it's true that communities have raised costs to help with capital construction. However, we in York region are growing at the rate of 35,000 people a year, and this government is not keeping up to that rapid growth; they know they're underfunding health care. Why now are they insisting that the local municipality download costs onto the property taxpayer that he knows they should be paying?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** The honourable member sure does stretch himself into a pretzel with some of what he has to say. He talks about not funding growth in high-growth regions as if he can't see that in Richmond Hill there's a great big construction crane adding an element to the hospital. It's as if the honourable member doesn't know that in the last five years, a small hospital in York region, in Newmarket, has emerged as one of our biggest and has under way at the moment a regional cancer



centre. It's as if he doesn't know that in Brampton, at Credit Valley, at Trillium hospital, in Oshawa and in Ajax at present, there is hospital construction under way. And it's as if the honourable member from York region doesn't know that new hospital construction will begin very soon in Markham, and that work is under way to build on the community health centre that's already under construction in Vaughan, with new health care facilities. Our government has constructed more hospitals in the last five years than the last five governments in the province of Ontario.

1110

### GREEN POWER GENERATION

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is to the Minister of Economic Development. January's job numbers from Stats Canada show a collapsing job market, with 71,000 jobs lost in January alone. Over 300,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost over the past four years.

The NDP is a strong supporter of green energy jobs, but we also know that without a strong buy-Ontario component to the new act, green energy manufacturing jobs will be created in Europe and the USA.

Will the green energy act, Minister, require wind turbines, solar panels and other green energy components and inputs to be manufactured in the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** To the Minister of Energy.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I really appreciate his anticipation of the introduction later today of the Green Energy Act. It's a comprehensive piece of legislation that, amongst other things, does carve out the capacity to establish by regulation domestic content guidelines on a case-by-case basis. Wind turbines and biogas may reflect different opportunities to build an Ontario supply chain, and the piece of legislation will most certainly give us the opportunity to do that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** The problem is that the government is really off to a bad start on this issue. Of the 2,200 estimated jobs to be created by the six new wind farm projects announced in late January, there are absolutely no manufacturing jobs being created with them. According to the energy ministry staff, the jobs are primarily short-term construction jobs, with some ongoing maintenance and operations work. Any energy project, green or not, will create some short-term construction jobs.

I repeat: Will the Green Energy Act require wind turbines, solar panels and other green energy inputs to be manufactured in the province of Ontario, or will most of the 50,000 new jobs go to the United States or Europe?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** The 50,000 new jobs associated with the Green Energy Act over the course of three years do most certainly depend upon the creation of enhanced manufacturing capacity in the province of Ontario. This will be substantially aided by the legislation itself, which will have domestic content provisions, if supported by the Legislature.

On that point, I do believe that when my honourable friend has an opportunity to review the legislation when presented, if passed, he will see the opportunities to build a much greater domestic supply chain in the province of Ontario.

We have wind turbines rising up to provide energy from what the wind has to offer. We want to make sure that they're standing on steel that has been milled by the good people of Sault Ste. Marie and by the good people of Hamilton. I think that's one of the reasons that the honourable member, I hope, will be encouraged to find support for today's forthcoming Green Energy Act.

### TOURISM

**Mr. Bruce Crozier:** My question is for the Minister of Tourism.

Minister, recently a report was presented to you entitled *Discovering Ontario: A Report on the Future of Tourism*, by the member for Vaughan, who last year was appointed to chair the tourism competitiveness study. The chair met with tourism operators and other stakeholders throughout the province to hear what they had to say on how to improve the industry. In fact, I am aware that the chair heard from Windsor Essex Trolley Tours, the convention bureau of Windsor-Essex county and the township of Pelee, and the town of LaSalle.

Now that the report is complete and the recommendations have been provided to the minister, I ask the minister to provide this House with the next steps the province will be taking with regard to this report.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I'd like to thank our new grandpa, the member for Essex, for the question this morning.

It being Tourism Day at Queen's Park, it also gives me a great opportunity to thank again the member for Vaughan, Greg Sorbara, and his team, who did such a great job in preparing the report that the member for Essex was referring to.

We're currently reviewing the report. It is a very substantial report, with 20 recommendations that are going to have a great impact on the entire tourism industry across the province.

Many of those who participated in the consultations in the drafting of this report are here today with us in the Legislature, and I want to take this opportunity to thank them.

This study was commissioned by our government to take a total overview of the tourism industry. We committed to this study in our 2007 election platform, and I'm very proud that within two years we've delivered on this study. We involved over 500 stakeholders in 13 public consultations across the province, including in the areas of Windsor, Niagara Falls—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Bruce Crozier:** As the minister mentioned, the chair's recommendations in the competitiveness study are advice to our government, and his report contains



suggestions to help government work with the tourism sector.

In the report, the chair proposes several recommendations on how to strengthen the tourism industry. The second recommendation outlined in the report, as a matter of fact, is to establish tourism regions to better coordinate tourism marketing and management across the province.

I know of tourism marketing organizations that exist to promote my riding, such as the convention bureau of Windsor, Essex County and Pelee Island. I ask the Minister: How would this recommendation, if implemented, affect these local organizations and initiatives?

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** Thanks again to the member for Essex. I had the opportunity to meet with the good people in the town of LaSalle this morning at OGRA/RAMA. There was a lot of interest around this study and around some of the recommendations in this study, particularly one about the creation of regions.

Tourism in Ontario is an economic driver, and it's important for everyone in this Legislature and for the people of Ontario to understand what an economic driver it is. We are looking, through this report, to create regions across the province, and to provide more support to our regions in order for them to market themselves across the province and around the world. We want to create strong regions and strong organizations within those regions. We will be consulting closely with our industry partners across the province as we work in co-operation with our industry partners to create these regions and organizations.

Again, I want to thank the chair for drafting this report for us. I want to thank the many, many stakeholders and private citizens across the province who provided the—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

## AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** My question is to the Minister of Economic Development. Minister, you're aware that the auto agreements in the United States keep coming to fruition; they keep moving down that road. What we hear from your ministry and what we hear from you is that we're still negotiating.

In 30 days, President Obama put together the most comprehensive stimulus program that the world has ever seen. In that same time, Ontario announced that our budget is going to be delayed by 30 days. There's a timeliness associated with these things, and we have to move down the road in concert with the United States and keep in lockstep with them.

Minister, can you tell us if the negotiations are going on well, and can you also tell us whether or not the legacy costs of the automotive industry are on the table?

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** The member asks a very good question. This is the challenge that the companies are facing because of the huge risks that would take place with respect to either filing under Chapter 11 or CCAA. The effort is to undertake a massive restructuring outside

of that scenario that requires the companies to address their legacy costs.

The plans that were submitted by General Motors, quite comprehensively, and Chrysler, in a more compact form, sought to address that. The government of Ontario continues to work with the federal government and the auto companies. There is an exchange of information. It is satisfactory to date. Yes, this is the second round of negotiations. They have provided an ask, which doesn't necessarily mean that that is what the government is going to provide, and we will continue—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** To the same minister: I think I heard that the legacy costs are on the table, along with many other issues. Minister, are you aware that those legacy costs could amount to as much as \$40 billion of Canadian and Ontario taxpayers' dollars? Are you willing to go down that road?

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** I can safely say that there will absolutely not be a \$40-billion give from Canada to those auto companies. So, no, that ain't going to happen.

North American-wide, the decision that the United States makes is going to be one in which we collaborate significantly with Canada, but the situation that we have here is a proportion of the North American industry at large. What Canada wants to obtain is proportionate and continued viable growth by these companies, in exchange for a proportionate loan or other delivery of financial assistance that the government may negotiate with these companies.

So that number that you threw out there is in a different stratosphere. What we're trying to do is deal with the Canadian issues, on Canadian terms, in a very Canadian—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

1120

## COMMUNITY COLLEGES COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** A question to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities: In October 2008, the McGuinty government changed the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act to recognize a worker's right to join a union and take part in collective bargaining. From January 19 to February 5, more than 3,500 people voted at 60 college locations around Ontario to see if they wished to join the Ontario Public Service Employees Union. These workers, however, are being denied the results of their own vote. Ontario's community colleges are blocking the votes from being counted. They are using every option available to stop part-time and sessional faculty from knowing the results of their legal vote. Will the government call on the colleges to drop their opposition to counting the votes and support the democratic rights of their employees?

**Hon. John Milloy:** To the Minister of Labour.



**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** First, I want to commend the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities for bringing forward the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act, 2008.

I want to say to the member opposite that this government is committed to restoring balance and fairness to labour relations in Ontario. That is what we have done for the last five years, working with trade unions, working with employers and working with the employees.

The collective bargaining for college employees is governed by MTCU. The matter that the member brings forward is before the Ontario Labour Relations Board, and it would be inappropriate for me to comment because the matter is before the board.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** It seems to me that this government supports the existence of democratic rights but not their actual implementation. You know what, Minister? I believe that you don't mind the delay in this process. In fact, I think you would be very happy if these workers were denied their rights until after the next election.

In light of your enthusiasm for your own bill, I hope you would prove me wrong today. Will this government honour its own legislation and instruct the colleges to drop their opposition and count the votes?

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** Just to repeat to the member, we were the ones who introduced this piece of legislation. I would hope the member doesn't want me to presuppose what the board's decision will be. Right now, it is before the board.

What I can tell the member is that we work very closely on labour relations. Our ministry is always there to assist with our mediators. We have the best labour relations in this province that we have seen in the last 30 years. That is bringing stability. It is bringing fairness. It is working with our partners, our employers, our labour unions and our employees.

Allow the board to do its work, I say to the member, so that we can continue with the type of labour relations we have had over the last five years and continue to build on that.

## HOSPITAL SERVICES

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Many Ontarians feel they are waiting too long to receive care in hospital emergency rooms. I know it's a problem that is not isolated to this province alone. Patients across the country are having similar complaints. I also know it's a challenging problem. Wait times in emergency rooms depend on a number of factors: what other options exist in the community, the number of available beds in a hospital, the number of health care professionals who are able to work, and the list goes on.

Ontarians are eager to see ER wait times come down. Can the Minister of Health tell the House what he is doing to reduce the amount of time that Ontarians spend waiting in hospital ERs?

**Hon. David Caplan:** I'd like to thank the member from Ottawa Centre for his question and for his advocacy, because, in fact, most recently this government has begun setting targets for time spent in emergency departments. As Dr. Eric Letovsky, head of Credit Valley Hospital's emergency department, said recently, "This is really the first time we've seen government make emergency wait times a political priority."

Since our government was elected in 2003, we've launched a number of initiatives to help reduce emergency department wait times, including a \$109-million emergency department strategy. We're helping patients learn about health care services in their communities other than emergency rooms where they can go to get care. We have accomplished this through our new website called Your Health Care Options. We're creating more family health teams and nurse-practitioner-led clinics. We're paying hospitals incentives to improve ER performance. We're addressing the alternative-level-of-care challenge, combined—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I'm glad to hear that the government is taking steps to reduce ER wait times, and I'm pleased that the minister has decided to take measures on the amount of time Ontarians have to spend in the ER and set wait-time targets. Still, looking at the hospital in my riding of Ottawa Centre, I'm concerned. The total time patients will have to wait in the ER at the Civic campus of the Ottawa Hospital is above the provincial target. Though I know the hospital is working hard to meet the newly established goals, I also know that my constituents are no doubt concerned about the length of time they may have to wait to get there.

Can the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care explain why he decided to publicly report the length of stay in Ontario's ERs, and when Ontarians can expect to see progress?

**Hon. David Caplan:** When Ontarians need to use an emergency department, we want to make sure that they can get fast, appropriate and a high quality of care as quickly as possible. We're beginning to report on how long Ontarians may have to wait in a provincial emergency room because we govern on the principle that if you track it, you can improve it. We're committed to improving hospital emergency department wait times in this province. There is no doubt in my mind that meeting these targets will take time, but I'm encouraged by what I'm hearing from our hospitals.

Dr. Naveed Mohammad, site chief of emergency at Brampton Civic Hospital said, "The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and our LHIN are taking a comprehensive, multi-pronged approach to improving things. This is something we will solve but we will solve over time. I am confident that as the data comes out every few months, you will notice that things are getting better." I agree with Dr. Mohammad. I know that with our continued investment and support, Ontario's hospitals—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.



## PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** My question is for the finance minister. On December 2, the Premier wouldn't commit to funding Ottawa's \$278 million in shovel-ready projects like the Strandherd-Armstrong bridge and rapid transit routes, yet you've been hoarding \$200 million, first promised in 2004. Since then, times have changed. We're in a massive recession and we need to bolster transit after our strike. Your government has a responsibility to kick-start our local economy and move Ottawa's transportation plan forward.

Will you put your money where your mouth is and work with the other levels of government to fund projects like the Strandherd-Armstrong bridge?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** As much as I would like to take the response, I'll pass it to the Minister of Infrastructure.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** I do think that the tone of the question doesn't actually reflect the tone of our government's view towards opportunities to participate with the government of Canada, with the city of Ottawa, in what we would all agree are much-necessary investments in public transit initiatives in that community. To be very forthright about this, we have had money on the table there for quite a long time. The Ottawa community has still been challenged a little bit, getting their act together more recently, for sure, and we're very, very supportive of that.

I could tell my honourable friend—I know she has a good relationship, as I do, with the federal minister for transportation with responsibility for infrastructure—that a quiet conversation with Minister Baird might provide the honourable member with some backdrop for the extent to which we're all very committed to finding solutions that can advance on the much-needed public transit infrastructure investments in the nation's capitol.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I appreciate the minister speaking with me, but I have had conversations with both levels of government over the weekend and they are concerned. It's now been three months since the city set its priorities; it has been over five years since your government first promised \$200 million to Ottawa, yet it has not flowed. How can we trust any commitment your government is going to make with respect to infrastructure if it has taken five years for \$200 million to flow?

Your days of making phony photo-ops are over with. We're in a recession and we need you to act. When are you going to let 2004's money flow so that shovels will be in the ground for the Strandherd-Armstrong bridge and other transit priorities in the city of Ottawa, or is that \$200 million just a broken promise?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** The honourable member used the word "phony" in her question. She ought to practise her questions like other members of the opposition do, in front of the mirror, because the word applies rather well here, as if none of us know that the Ottawa community itself, the city of Ottawa, had been struggling

somewhat with what their transit priorities are. We have been waiting patiently, as one that's very, very eager to participate in these projects. Not that bridge project; we've been clear on that.

But honestly, the honourable member has done an injustice to the conversations that are ongoing between our government, the government of Canada and in participation with the city of Ottawa. Our commitment to building out transit capacity in that community is clear. We've had \$200 million on the table. No one expects that that will be the final number. We're looking for the opportunity to increase that, but some of the rules around how money will be spent are only being determined today by that same federal minister that we speak about—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

1130

## MANUFACTURING JOBS

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is to the Minister of Economic Development. Bauer Industries, a 120-year-old manufacturer in Waterloo, without any warning told its employees not to come back to work until further notice. Many Bauer employees have given 25, 30 and more years of their labour to this employer but were shut out without their last week's pay, without their severance, without their record of employment. What is the government's plan to help Bauer Industries and these long-term workers?

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** I obviously want to agree with the member and thank him for raising this issue, in the sense that this is a heck of a time for those people. They're going through a heck of a time. The lack of information, the jolt of losing their job, the impact on their families and communities must be enormous. I appreciate that the member's doing everything he can to assist, and certainly, on behalf of the government, I want to make the same commitment.

The individuals, the workers, may be eligible for some assistance working through the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, and I'm happy to follow up with the member on that. In addition to that, the work with the federal EDC or BDC or the existing funds here in the province of Ontario—if there is a way in which we can provide assistance to the companies so as to provide them with a jump-start within the criteria that exist, I'm more than happy to do that.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Thank you, Minister, for your concern. However, the government has failed these employees, with scant protection for their hard-earned wages and severance.

In 2007, I tabled Bill 6, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000, to provide for an Employee Wage Security Program, which would provide these workers with their earned wages and severance. This government has deliberately held Bill 6 off the table of a standing committee, and these hard-working employees of Bauer face a long, drawn-out, costly process to try and get their money back. Will this government finally stand



up for workers in Ontario and bring Bill 6 onto the committee agenda for public consultations and hearings immediately?

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** I'm going to refer that supplementary to the Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** As the Minister of Economic Development said, it is always very difficult when somebody loses their job—the impact on the individual, their families and the community. The ministry has been working with the federal government on the wage earner protection program, which is now in force. I've also written to the federal Minister of Labour. I know that my colleagues Minister Bentley and Minister Duguid also wrote to the Minister of Labour, because when it comes to bankruptcies and insolvencies, it does fall under the jurisdiction of the federal government. The wage earner protection program will go a ways to helping employees who have unfairly lost their jobs, but we want to get more for them, and that's why we're working with the federal government to see if they can enhance those programs.

#### SMALL BUSINESS

**Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde:** My question is for the Minister of Small Business and Consumer Services. Minister, every day we see stories in the paper about the challenges that businesses are faced with in the current economic climate. Some businesses are closing, and others are struggling to stay open.

What is the government of Ontario doing to support small businesses in these tough economic times?

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** I want to thank the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell for asking this question. I also want to thank him for actually doing a lot for the small businesses when he was the chair of the Small Business Agency of Ontario.

Our government has a lot of programs and services that we provide to small businesses. I know these are tough economic times, because of the global crisis, for our families and also for our businesses.

But I want to talk especially about one program which we have, which is the Ontario craft brewers opportunity fund. This is a program that we introduced to assist the small brewers in our local communities who provide a very useful service and add a lot of value to the local communities. This is an \$8-million fund over a four-year period, and some of the breweries that operate in our province and provide a very useful service are eligible for this fund. I would be more than pleased to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde:** Minister, the craft brewers opportunity fund is a great initiative by the McGuinty government, and the government should be applauded for recognizing that it is important to help these small businesses succeed. Recently I was at Beau's Beer, the best beer in eastern Ontario, the all-natural brewing company in Vankleek Hill, to announce their funding grant.

Can you tell us who is eligible and if any other grants have been made?

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** I want to thank the member again for asking this question. There are 40 craft brewers in our province, and they contribute between 15% and 20% of the jobs of the Ontario brewing industry and produce about 300,000 hectolitres of beer annually. These are quality products that they produce in our local communities, and they contribute a great deal to our communities as well.

In the first phase of this program we already distributed the funds, and my colleagues from Kitchener–Conestoga and Kitchener Centre made the announcement for the Brick breweries in Kitchener. Also, my colleague from Huron–Bruce made the announcement at Steelback Brewery in January. Overall, we have paid about \$1.79 million to 33 breweries who are eligible under this fund, and this is a program that will assist them greatly to do the kind of work they do in our local communities—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

#### CHILD PROTECTION

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. The Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth released his annual report today, called 90 Deaths: Ninety Voices Silenced. He asked the question: Why did 90 children die in care in 2007? The only things standing in the way of his answering the question are your ministry and your government. Last year he had to sue you to get the information he needed to protect children. In response to an earlier question this morning, you referred to the protocol as a current work in progress. However, the advocate says in his report that the protocol speaks to the process, not the information itself.

Will you guarantee that this new protocol will give the advocate all the information he deems necessary?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I think it's important to note that the advocate's report that highlights the death of 90 children who were in the care of the children's aid society actually comes from the report from the Paediatric Death Review Committee and the Deaths Under Five Committee, which that reported in June last year. The information is contained in this report and is not available through our ministry, but rather through the coroner. The protocol, which now has been signed, is designed to ensure that information can flow to the advocate in a way that is timely and fulsome.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** Whenever a child dies in care, the children's aid society prepares reports for the coroner and your ministry. You have decided that these reports must remain secret for privacy reasons. Minister, why won't you let the advocate receive these reports on children who have died so he can use them to help those still in peril?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** There is nothing more important when a child dies than that we learn from that death and make changes as a result of that death so that



other children will not die in the future. We have a very clear approach. When the coroner recommends that changes be made, we make those changes. We will all, in this House, remember the tragic death of Katelynn Sampson, and we all are aware in this House of the changes that have been made as a result of that tragedy. The Paediatric Death Review Committee and the Deaths Under Five Committee are the vehicles where we examine these deaths, and they make recommendations. Our ministry is completely committed to acting on the recommendations of those committees.

### DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

**Mr. Michael Prue:** My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Ontarians across the province are waiting up to a year for a MRI scan, a scan that can provide life-saving information for a patient with cancer or other acute conditions.

The residents of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock are not even so lucky as to be on the waiting list. There is no MRI machine in that entire riding. Will the minister provide a date when the good people of this riding will have the MRI machine for which they have waited so long?

**Hon. David Caplan:** I can't provide a date for that. However, I can tell you that 16 new MRIs have opened since 2003: three in Ottawa, one in Owen Sound, one in Richmond Hill, one in Markham, one in Halton, one in Windsor, one in Niagara Falls, one in Orillia, one in Guelph, one in Belleville, one in Cobourg, one in Bradford, one in Chatham and one in Hamilton.

In fact, the result of these investments in new capacity and in new MRIs right throughout the province has meant that MRI wait times have declined 22%. This is the first government, I say to the member from the New Democratic Party, that has taken this concerted action to expand capacity for MRIs right across the province. The results have been better service for Ontarians, and I say quite confidently to the member that we're going to continue with those actions.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I listened to that great, big, long list, but the list never included the good people of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock. There's no mention of Lindsay or any other city or town in that riding.

In 2007, Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock was promised an MRI machine. The community desperately needs the scanner, just like every other community. Residents have raised the funds to purchase an MRI machine, yet the province has refused to deliver on their end of the promise. For communities like those in Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, the government's response of launching yet another study confirms their fears that the wait will continue.

Will the minister admit that his government has failed the people of this good riding and all the communities in it?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister?

**Hon. David Caplan:** I'll admit no such thing. In fact, no commitment has ever been made to this riding or to this hospital foundation or corporation for additional MRIs. In fact, we have expanded significantly services to there.

I've had an opportunity to speak with Rick Johnson, the candidate who I believe is going to provide the kind of representation that the riding deserves. I think the member opposite is confused in the representation, understanding that, back when New Democrats were in government, they cut nurses. Back when they were in government, they cut medical school spaces.

Rick Johnson is the kind of member who will make sure that residents of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock have the kind of access to primary health care—have the kind of access—whether that's family health teams or nurse practitioner-led clinics. That's the kind of work that I know the people of Kawartha—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. The time for question period has ended. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1143 to 1300.*

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. George Smitherman:** It's my privilege to introduce in the members' gallery several guests, most notably my husband, Christopher Peloso, Chief Charles Fox and Meladina Hardy, Chief Isadore Day of the Serpent River First Nations, Deb Doncaster from the community energy fund and the Green Energy Act Alliance, Don McCabe from the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, and Ken Elsey from the Canadian Energy Efficiency Alliance.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I'd like to introduce the former member from Thornhill and one of the best councillors to ever come out of York region, Mario Racco.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I would like to introduce David Clancy, who is in the gallery today. He is one of my staff members who doesn't often come over to the House, so we're excited to have him with us.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I'd like to introduce Chris Chopik in the gallery today: chief agent of change, Bosley Real Estate. Thanks for being here, Chris.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'd like to introduce Kristen Annis, who used to be my senior policy adviser. Anything that I did well is her responsibility; anything I did badly is my responsibility.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** I just want to introduce three members of the great riding of Scarborough-Rouge River: Steve Szilard, Shamoon Poonawala and Murad Hussain. They are here to observe the Legislature.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I would like to welcome Erika Mozes in the west gallery, a former staff member who now works for GlaxoSmithKline in the proud Mississauga-Streetsville riding.

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** It's my pleasure to introduce Mr. Ghulam Sajjan in the west gallery.



**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** For anyone who wasn't introduced today, welcome to Queen's Park as well.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### MORRIS NEWSPAPER GROUP

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Last week, the news actually made the news in Nepean-Carleton. I learned last week that my good friends at the Manotick Messenger, the Morris group of newspapers, were up for several awards at the OCNA: best newspaper for the Manotick Messenger; OCNA columnist of the year for Jeffrey Morris—he's also nominated for OCNA reporter of the year; and best editorial for the Barrhaven Independent.

But they also made the news last week because they lost their advertising executive, who was a very close personal friend of mine. As Mr. Morris, the owner and publisher of the Morris group of newspapers, said, "the celebration is somewhat hollow without Glen Dicks here to share it with us. Dicks, who was the Independent's advertising manager until he went on medical leave in January, passed away last week at the age of 48. Glen was a part of everything we did. He was heavily involved in the community and he was the one who gave us so many leads or acted as a sounding board for us."

I can attest to that. Glen campaigned for me in two elections. But he was also the type of character we all have in our ridings, one who knows everybody, attends every community event, and always brings a camera. About a month ago, Glen stopped into my office. I didn't know he was sick. He hid it from all of us because he was so active in the community. He was apparently at the time on medical leave but didn't want to let me know that, and it was the last time I saw him. He was bringing in the community newspapers, which he had done every Friday for the past three years.

So to Glen's family, his wife, Debbie, and all of the staff at the Manotick Messenger, Barrhaven Independent and other papers of the Morris group of newspapers, I want to send them my condolences in what must be a very stressful and strenuous week, but also congratulate them on the wonderful awards they are up for.

### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Paul Miller:** "Save Our Hamilton Hospitals": This is the theme at the Hamilton-wide rally tonight, where residents will fight to end our local health care crisis.

We are calling on the McGuinty government to give Hamilton hospitals the funding they need. We cannot afford to be squeezed any further: 400 nursing job cuts, \$21 million cut from Hamilton Health Sciences, speech and language services cuts, babies' Best Start program cut, rehab beds cut. The pain continues: Funding for 70

transitional beds is running out, housekeeping and food services are being threatened with contracting out, our fertility clinic is being privatized and we have lost an emergency room.

It's appalling that the government supports these cutbacks. Have they thought of the cost: more backlogs, more delays and more infections?

Let's stop gambling with the health of Hamiltonians. My message to the Premier and Minister Caplan is clear: Properly fund and save our Hamilton hospitals from future tragedies.

We in Hamilton are once again getting together, as we did in the VON crisis, and there will be many, many people out to this rally tonight to send a strong message to Queen's Park. I hope they're listening.

### SANTÉ WINE FESTIVAL

**Mr. Mike Colle:** The Santé International Wine Festival, from May 5-10, is for wine and food lovers alike. It is an opportunity for Ontario to compete and showcase our superb wines on an international scale. The Santé International Wine Festival is a chance for people to savour the diverse flavours of international wines from all over the world, meet winemakers and sample premium vintages. If you are a wine enthusiast—as you are, Mr. Speaker—you will enjoy a variety of events at the Santé international festival.

The festival attracts people from everywhere and brings together many culinary talents. This year, guests include American iron chef Cat Cora, as well as Toronto celebrity chefs Corbin Tomaszeski and Anna Olson, and even Greg Couillard is coming.

Among the Santé wine festival's events is the ultimate winemakers dinner, which pairs celebrity chefs with world-class wines. The festival's highlights also include international wine tasting, along with sip, savour and learn seminars aimed at wine connoisseurs as well as novices.

As you know, our hospitality industry employs tens of thousands of Ontarians in tourism and also employs tens of thousands of Ontarians in making Ontario's wines, which are some of the finest in the world. I invite everyone to participate in the Santé wine festival, which was supported last year by a Celebrate Ontario grant of \$75,000. Let's all enjoy Ontario wines and world wines at the Santé wine festival.

### CARDIAC CARE

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** Recently, I had the pleasure of attending the first annual Wyatt's Warriors Have a Heart Gala in Whitby. The event was held in support of Wyatt Steven Berndt and the cardiac critical care unit at Sick Kids Hospital in Toronto. It was a wonderful evening filled with a five-course meal, dancing, auctions and live entertainment, and very fitting, considering it was held the day before Valentine's Day.

Wyatt was born in April 2007 in Ajax and weighed in at six pounds, three ounces. He was immediately trans-



ferred to Sick Kids Hospital, as he was clearly lacking oxygen. Wyatt was later diagnosed with a multitude of cardiac problems and DiGeorge syndrome. Wyatt has spent 18 of the first 20 months of his life at Sick Kids Hospital, and his family can't say enough good things about the hospital.

In his short life, Wyatt has been through five open-heart surgeries, two cardiac catheterizations, two airway stents, a tracheotomy and countless other procedures and tests. Wyatt definitely is a warrior, and so are his dedicated and loving family members.

I'd also like to take this time to recognize Wyatt's aunt, Laura Celsie, who worked tirelessly to organize this wonderful and successful gala.

Recently, we've heard that Wyatt is going through another difficult period and may be fighting off a case of meningitis and is awaiting another catheterization. I would like to ask that the members of this House keep little Wyatt and his family in their thoughts, in hopes of a favourable outcome for this little champion who has fought so hard.

### WINTERLUDE

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Over the past three weekends, my riding of Ottawa Centre has been honoured to host Winterlude, one of Canada's most famous winter carnivals.

Every February, hundreds of thousands of people, more than one third from outside the Ottawa area, take part in Winterlude's many activities. Now in its 30th year, its success relies on the support of the community, the private sector, the media and all levels of government. That said, I'm very proud that the McGuinty government invested \$300,000 this year to help strengthen the festival through the Celebrate Ontario program and help support the production of a new multimedia sound and light show called Ukiuk that celebrated Canadian winters.

1310

Winterlude also helps to generate more than \$82.5 million of economic spinoffs throughout the national capital region. It is estimated that this year alone, over 650,000 people visited Winterlude in Ottawa. I want to thank the over 800 volunteers who made this year's celebration a success.

### INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'm pleased to rise today, and it's my pleasure to welcome all the delegates of the Ontario Good Roads Association and the Rural Ontario Municipal Association. As a person who has spent 18½ years in municipal politics, I have a lot of respect for municipal politicians as, each and every year, they try to face the challenges and come up with a reasonable tax base.

Earlier today, I introduced some friends of mine and some constituents who reside in the riding next to me, the

township of Georgian Bay, which is in Mr. Miller's riding. They're here to try to solicit some appropriate meetings with some of the ministers. So far, they've been unable to actually get meetings with the appropriate ministries.

But, you know, an example of why people come to the good roads conference is to try to get some of the issues resolved. An issue they had is with the infrastructure announcement at AMO last year. They have 18,000 residences in their municipality, but only about 2,500 permanent residences. They received an infrastructure grant of \$79,000. But a municipality almost exactly the same size, with exactly the same number of residents but with 14,000 permanent residents, received \$800,000. It's a true discrepancy. Those are the kinds of discrepancies that we have to try to resolve. I wish all the delegates all the best as they try to resolve the discrepancies and move forward to do the very best they can for their constituents.

### THUNDER BAY BLUES FESTIVAL

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** The Thunder Bay Blues Festival will be held from July 3 to 5 at Marina Park on the city's waterfront and will feature two of North America's top blues groups, the Lost Lonely Boys and the Robert Cray Band, among 18 different acts.

Adjacent to Lake Superior and overlooking the legendary Sleeping Giant, Marina Park provides a spectacular setting to enjoy a wide range of blues performers. Through the contributions of the Ontario Ministry of Tourism's Celebrate Ontario, which donated over \$32,000 to the festival, corporate sponsors and over 300 volunteers, the festival has had an average attendance of 15,000 fans, making it one of the most anticipated annual musical events in northwestern Ontario.

In addition to its potential for increased tourism and economic development for Thunder Bay, profits from the festival are donated to the George Jeffrey Children's Centre and Camp Quality, which provide support to children with cancer and their families. Blues fans come from all over northwestern and southern Ontario, Minnesota, Wisconsin and the Dakotas, and as far away as England and the United Arab Emirates.

More than music, the blues is everyone's psychologist, confidant, personal adviser and friend. The blues is realistic. It keeps life in perspective, offering frank discourse, humour and shared sorrow as valid options for dealing with the tribulations that periodically come our way. In so doing, the blues is a refuge where optimism and human resiliency reign, souls are cleansed and spirits raised.

A very special-thank you goes out to Bob Halvorsen, the hard-working staff at the Thunder Bay Community Auditorium and the tireless volunteers who make this festival happen. Come to the Thunder Bay Blues Festival this July 3 to 5, 2009, for the best in blues music, great food and a world-class location.



## RENEWABLE ENERGY

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** It's with great pleasure that I rise and remind members about the McGuinty government's commitment to creating a cleaner, greener and healthier Ontario. We all recognize the need to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and increase the province's sources of renewable energy to help clean our air, combat climate change and stimulate Ontario's economy.

After eight years of increased reliance on coal and no long-term energy plan under the previous government, the McGuinty Liberals have been moving forward with the most ambitious climate change initiative in North America: the elimination of coal.

We have already cut our coal generation by one third, and by 2011 it will be cut by two thirds. We're also supporting renewable energy projects, from wind and water to bioenergy and solar. We're increasing capacity at the Sir Adam Beck generating station, which will produce an additional 1.6 billion kilowatt hours of clean, renewable electricity per year. In 2003, there were only 15 megawatts of wind power in operation in Ontario from 10 wind turbines. Ontario now has 964 megawatts of wind power online from 589 wind turbines.

These investments are examples of the McGuinty government's commitment to Ontario's environment and future generations through renewable energy sources that allow us all to breathe easier.

## ENERGY CONSERVATION

**Mr. Pat Hoy:** Climate change is quickly becoming the central issue of this new century. The McGuinty government understands that energy conservation must involve everyone working together to use less energy, whether it is in our houses, businesses, schools or industrial operations. We also recognize that government has a primary role by making resources available and conservation affordable.

More than 124,000 Ontarians have participated in the Ontario home energy savings program, which provides homeowners with up to \$150 toward the cost of a home energy audit. More than 42,000 Ontarians have completed retrofits and received rebates of up to \$10,000 for retrofits that address the energy issues identified in that audit.

The Ontario solar thermal heating incentive has allocated up to \$14.4 million to assist Ontario institutional, commercial and industrial organizations in advancing solar water and solar air installations.

My colleague Phil McNeely also introduced a private member's bill in this House that would require home energy rating reports. This bill received praise from many organizations, including the Consumers Council of Canada.

These initiatives underscore the McGuinty Liberals' commitment to being a leading jurisdiction in energy conservation. We will continue to work hard for Ontarians to show that it's actually pretty easy to be green.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

GREEN ENERGY AND GREEN  
ECONOMY ACT, 2009LOI DE 2009 SUR L'ÉNERGIE VERTE  
ET L'ÉCONOMIE VERTE

Mr. Smitherman moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 150, An Act to enact the Green Energy Act, 2009 and to build a green economy, to repeal the Energy Conservation Leadership Act, 2006 and the Energy Efficiency Act and to amend other statutes / *Projet de loi 150, Loi édictant la Loi de 2009 sur l'énergie verte et visant à développer une économie verte, abrogeant la Loi de 2006 sur le leadership en matière de conservation de l'énergie et la Loi sur le rendement énergétique et modifiant d'autres lois.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The minister for a short statement.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** I will make a statement during ministerial statements.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY  
AND RESPONSESRENEWABLE ENERGY  
AND ENERGY CONSERVATION

**Hon. George Smitherman:** It's a pleasure to welcome guests to the Legislature today.

Since 2003, the government of Ontario has been moving forward with the most ambitious climate change initiative in North America: the elimination of coal. Our progress to date, a renaissance of our energy system, reflected by billions in new investments, has been so successful that today Ontario is raising the bar on our collective ambitions.

If the Green Energy and Green Economy Act that has been introduced today is passed, it would make this province North America's green energy leader. The act, which would in turn amend no less than 15 existing statutes, has two equally important thrusts: first, making it easier to bring renewable energy projects to life, and secondly, creating a culture of conservation, one where we go about our daily lives using less energy. These two thrusts combined would support a new green economy for this province and help create sustainable green employment for Ontarians.

1320

Economic modelling predicts that the act would help create more than 50,000 direct and indirect jobs in the next three years: employment in construction, manufac-



turing and assembly, servicing and installation, engineering and trucking; vast job opportunities and more efficient building design and retrofits involving architects, engineers, contractors and installers; work for builders, financiers, electricians and inspectors; and jobs in technology as we build on our smart-metering initiative and move toward a smart grid.

If passed, the act would turbocharge the creation of renewable energy in this province and set the standard for green energy policy across this continent. It would make this province the destination of choice for green power developers and incent proponents, large and small, to develop projects by offering an attractive price for renewable energy and the certainty that creates an attractive investment climate: certainty that power would be purchased at a fair price; certainty that wherever feasible, the power would be connected to the grid; certainty that government would issue permits in a timely way.

If passed, the act would ensure that new green power doesn't get tripped up in all kinds of red tape, but instead that new renewable generation would be built and flowing into the system faster, complete with service-time guarantees on our processes. And it would enable the government to set reasonable domestic content requirements for renewable power projects to ensure that more dollars are spent right here at home.

Our proposed legislation would create a best-in-class renewable energy feed-in tariff, a feed-in tariff that would offer an attractive price for renewable power, including wind, both onshore and offshore, solar, hydro, biomass, biogas and landfill gas, and would not limit the size of projects; a feed-in tariff that would guarantee that price for the life of the contract. With this single bold move, Ontario would join the ranks of global green power leaders like Denmark, Germany and Spain. We would also adopt a new and very different approach to the development of the grid infrastructure necessary to take the energy to market.

Our green energy experiences over these past several years have told us volumes about where our best renewable opportunities lie. Working proactively with our energy agencies, we would initiate investments in the development of new transmission capacity, and the act would replace the snail's pace with a sense of urgency.

Nowhere would our intentions be clearer than when it comes to streamlining the cumbersome processes that have created a patchwork of municipal bylaws. Like the Smoke-Free Ontario Act that came before it, this act would build on municipal leadership, uploading responsibilities to Queen's Park. The current model, where different municipalities have imposed varying setbacks on wind projects, would be replaced by universal setbacks from adjacent homes and other sensitive areas.

The proposed legislation would coordinate approvals from the Ministries of the Environment and Natural Resources into a streamlined process within a service guarantee. And so long as all necessary documentation is successfully completed, permits would be issued within a six-month service window. My ministry would emerge

with new capabilities and new leadership to support the facilitation of renewable energy projects.

The proposed act contemplates the emergence of thousands of smaller projects, especially in our urban areas. The reliability of our electricity system would be substantially enhanced with distributed generation projects that, for example, transform roofs that currently reflect the sun to rooftops that put it to use, for, while the bill may be called the Green Energy Act, make no mistake that the conservation thrust is just as important. Without a doubt, the least expensive energy to be found is the energy that we do not use in the first place. This legislation and the policies that it engenders seek to create a culture of conservation. We know that Ontarians themselves support this. Their actions speak volumes of their intentions. Recall Earth Hour, when we banded together in respect of our natural environment: one hour's worth of reverence that helps to stimulate awareness and create momentum for the culture of conservation, a culture capable of easing the burden on Mother Earth and our pocketbooks at the same time.

We've seen recent data that shows that people are changing their behaviour. For example, when it comes to changing light bulbs, a recent survey found that 84% of Canadian households have at least one green bulb in their home. We can build on that awareness to make even more impressive inroads.

If passed, the act would amend Ontario's building code, making energy efficiency a central tenet. We'll establish Energy Star as the energy efficiency standard so that household appliances sold in Ontario achieve continued reductions in their energy use, and implement standards for the efficient use of water, as this too has a direct impact on the electricity grid.

Building on the unanimous support offered by members of the Ontario Legislature to the bill introduced by the member for Ottawa-Orléans, my parliamentary assistant Phil McNeely, this proposed legislation would enable us to mandate home energy audits on all homes at the time of sale, and we won't stop there.

We must and we will take even bolder steps to address energy use in our own government operations and those that we fund. We'll establish Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design—LEED—silver as the new standard for the new buildings, and we will work with our broader public sector players like colleges, hospitals, universities and municipalities to develop energy plans to reduce their energy consumption.

In partnership with the private sector, we will invest in making commercial and industrial operations more energy-efficient and more productive at the same time. Because all energy consumers would reap the benefits of an improved energy system, we want to recognize that our investments in certain initiatives and programs that would be made possible by the legislation would be borne through energy rates.

This bill, this Green Energy Act, continues to transform Ontario's electricity generation system into one of the cleanest, greenest energy supply mixes in the world.



Indeed, we've made great strides already, and the Green Energy Act would stimulate an even greater focus in this area. Make no mistake: The things that we want, that all Ontarians want, are a cleaner climate, jobs in the green economy, enhanced productivity, a culture of conservation and a break for Mother Nature.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

*Interruption.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd just remind our guests: It's a pleasure to have you all here today; you are certainly welcome to observe but not to participate in the democratic process that is unveiling before you.

Responses?

#### RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ENERGY CONSERVATION

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It's my pleasure to respond to the minister. I must commend him on his choice of neckties today. I searched through my closet, but the only green tie I could find was one with shamrocks on it. I just didn't think it would fly.

Anyhow, he did say to me the other day, "You know, Yak, there are things in this bill you're going to like more than others," and he's absolutely right about that.

The environment has no greater friends in this Legislature than the members of the PC Party. I'll give you a couple of examples. Lands for Life, which was brought in by the previous government, was the biggest set-aside of protected lands in the history of this province; also the Smart Growth initiative that the current government borrowed much of when it came out with its current growth plan.

But the act that he is presenting today leaves us with a whole lot more questions than it does answers. The act is vague in many ways, and in the briefing that I had earlier today from ministry staff, they conceded that there are so many things yet to be determined through consultations with the OPA and other groups. As I said, there are so many questions about what this act will actually do. In fact, as the minister showed—he even gave me a CD today—there are no less than 15 statutes and acts that this act being presented today will actually amend here in the province of Ontario. So it's a very broad and far-reaching act, but we're getting very little information about what it will actually directly do.

One of the questions that people ask, and one of the questions I hear when we're out—this has been in the news because the minister has been out on a pre-selling tour this last little while with his supporters about this act. One of the questions we're getting is: "What will it actually mean to the ultimate price of electricity?" One thing about our economy here in the province of Ontario, and indeed the tremendous standard of living that we have enjoyed for decades: It has been built on access to reliable, abundant, affordable electricity. So there are some questions as to what this act will actually mean to the price of electricity. I know the Premier is talking about 50,000 new green jobs as a result of it, and he talks

about some of them being in the manufacturing sector. The manufacturing sector is one of the ones that is most affected by the price of electricity, and indeed the forestry sector as well.

The other group of people who are most affected by the price of electricity, and the minister knows this, are the people who are in the lowest level of incomes. If you're making a six-figure salary, the price of electricity is a relatively small part of your budget. But with the things that you cannot eliminate from your budget, such as food and housing and clothing, if you are a low-income resident of the province of Ontario, that electricity component of the bill is indeed significant, and we need to have some answers as to how this is going to be affected by this initiative.

1330

There's no question that conservation is important. No watt, no kilowatt, no megawatt, should ever be wasted. I can tell the minister, and I've told his predecessor, that several years ago my wife and I, along with our children, embarked on a program to conserve energy in our own home. We reduced our usage in our home by 40%, but over the last few years that has kind of levelled off, so we haven't done much better over the last couple of years. But we did do a pretty darned good job between 2003 and 2005 in making the changes in our home to reduce our usage of electricity. I think that is an important thing, and I think there are some gains to be made out there today in that part of this act.

The conservation part of this act, I think, is a little easier to understand than some of the things such as the feed-in tariffs that the minister is talking about, which indeed will offer incentives to produce new, green, renewable power. I think the people in the province of Ontario have a right to know what those incentives are going to be and how much they're going to be. For example, in the latest RES III buy-ins that you recently awarded 492 megawatts of wind, there has been no release of even the average price that you paid in that, which is unusual, given that those average prices were released on the earlier renewable energy standard offers that were awarded in the province of Ontario. So there are issues to be asked about.

The minister talks about and the Premier talked about the municipal component and how they're going to remove some of that red tape. Well, this is the government that has instituted more red tape in the last five years than any government before them. So we do have to see how that's going to roll out.

We will have a chance to debate this further in the House—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

#### RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ENERGY CONSERVATION

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Today, Ontario kind of accepted Denmark's point of nearly 40 years ago. In the 1970s, Denmark decided that one oil crisis was enough. It had



choices to make about its future: Would it invest heavily in nuclear? Would it develop renewable power? In fact, Denmark in the 1970s made the right choice, and now 20,000 people work in their wind industry.

In Germany, the second-largest purchaser of steel is the wind industry. Nine thousand people work in Pennsylvania, in Ohio, in their solar industry. In 2006, Portugal passed mandatory solar standards for homes. Australia today is fighting recession with a program to insulate two million homes—not 42,000; two million.

It's the new energy economy, and we are way past due for actually paying attention to what the rest of the world has been doing. Time is running out. Oil is running out. The climate is moving fast. We need to move fast, too.

The fact that this government is finally saying it will link jobs with climate change is welcome. It opens the debate. My goal in this process is to see that what we actually have come out at the end is a Green Energy Act that provides hundreds of thousands of jobs in Ontario, that transforms our economy, that actually does, George—Minister. Sorry, Speaker. My apologies.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** You're my constituent. You can call me George.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Now, George, as I was saying, my goal is to see that we actually deliver, that we don't get trapped in the timidity that I see in the bill before us. To that end, we'll work with trade unions, businesses, communities and all of those people who see the connections that have to be made if we're actually going to transform our economy and take advantage of what's happening in the rest of the world.

Like the other critic, when I had my briefing at noon, there weren't hard targets, there weren't hard numbers—"Wait for the IPSP; wait for the OPA." So what we have is a bill without targets for renewable energy. I asked whether this was going to affect the investment in nuclear. Right now, as far as they know, no.

So I have to ask myself: Is this a bill that's going to transform our economy but leave everything else the way it is, what really is happening here? We need large-scale energy retrofits in the hundreds of thousands, in the millions, in this province. I'm not seeing that in the material before us. We need to be working with industry to transform both the way they consume energy and the way they produce it. Every factory, every smelter, every steel mill and every refinery in this province should be an energy generator. They should be making money by selling into the grid and making sure that people have jobs.

There's a statement that there will be domestic content requirements. Quebec already has a 60% domestic content requirement for wind turbines; that's kick-starting their wind energy industry. We need that here. We'll get a chance to speak to this bill later this week, but for a government talking about 21st-century energy, still addicted to 20th-century nuclear power, there are real problems. The approach doesn't make sense. We're not actually taking on where the rest of the world is going. We're sticking with high-spending, risky nuclear alter-

natives instead of taking on fully what the world has to offer.

It's very belated that this government is acknowledging that there is an economic crisis and a climate crisis that can be addressed through the means of renewable power. We in the NDP will fight for a real green energy program, one that puts people to work—puts people to work in Hamilton, puts them to work in Welland and puts them to work across this province. We will fight to ensure that this proposal today doesn't act as a deflection, as a cover, for what is your largest investment, and that is in nuclear power. Face the facts: As long as you go down that road, it is going to be difficult to get over to the right road, the road that will build this province.

## PETITIONS

### SALES TAX

**Mr. Frank Klees:** This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the auto industry in Ontario and throughout North America is experiencing a major restructuring; and

"Whereas the current economic crisis is affecting the auto manufacturers and the front-line dealerships throughout Ontario; and

"Whereas many potential automobile purchasers are having difficulty accessing credit even at current prices; and

"Whereas the three-month tax holiday of the GST and the PST on the purchase of new and used cars and trucks would stimulate auto sales;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the provincial and federal governments to implement a three-month tax holiday, and that the Ontario Minister of Finance include the PST holiday in the next provincial budget."

I believe strongly in this initiative. I sign it and present it to the table.

### LONG-TERM CARE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have a petition from the people of Ottawa.

"Whereas understaffing in Ontario's nursing homes is a serious problem resulting in inadequate care for residents and unsafe conditions for staff;

"Whereas, after the Harris government removed the regulations providing minimum care levels in 1995, hours of care dropped below the previous 2.25 hour/day minimum;

"Whereas the recent improvements in hours of care are not adequate, vary widely and are not held to accountable standards;

"Whereas there is currently nothing in legislation to protect residents and staff from renewed cuts to care levels by future governments; and



"Whereas care needs have measurably increased with aging and the movement of people with more complex health needs from hospitals into long-term-care homes;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Immediately enact and fund an average care standard of 3.5 hours per resident per day in the regulations under the new Long-Term Care Homes Act."

I fully support this, and will send it to the clerks' table with page Yan.

1340

### EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

**Mr. Pat Hoy:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the federal government's employment insurance surplus now stands at \$54 billion; and

"Whereas over 75% of Ontario's unemployed are not eligible for employment insurance because of Ottawa's unfair eligibility rules; and

"Whereas an Ontario worker has to work more weeks to qualify and receives fewer weeks of benefits than other Canadian unemployed workers; and

"Whereas the average Ontario unemployed worker gets \$4,000 less in EI benefits than unemployed workers in other provinces and thus not qualifying for many retraining programs;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to press the federal government to reform the employment insurance program and to end this discrimination and unfairness towards Ontario's unemployed workers."

I've signed the petition.

### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I have a petition to do with Burk's Falls health centre:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Burk's Falls and District Health Centre provides vital health services for residents of Burk's Falls and the Almaguin Highlands of all ages, as well as seasonal residents and tourists; and

"Whereas the health centre helps to reduce demand on the Huntsville hospital emergency room; and

"Whereas the operating budget for Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare is insufficient to meet the growing demand for service in the communities of Muskoka-East Parry Sound; and

"Whereas budget pressures could jeopardize continued operation of the Burk's Falls health centre;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government and Minister of Health provide adequate increases in the operating budget of Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare to maintain current health services, including those provided by the Burk's Falls health centre."

I support this petition.

### CHILD CUSTODY

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I have a petition from some residents of the riding of Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the people of Ontario, deserve and have the right to request an amendment to the Children's Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their parents and grandparents.

"Whereas subsection 20(2.1) requires parents and others with custody of children to refrain from unreasonably placing obstacles to personal relations between the children and their grandparents; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2) contains a list of matters that a court must consider when determining the best interests of a child. The bill amends that subsection to include a specific reference to the importance of maintaining emotional ties between children and grandparents; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2.1) requires a court that is considering custody of or access to a child to give effect to the principle that a child should have as much contact with each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2.2) requires a court that is considering custody of a child to take into consideration each applicant's willingness to facilitate as much contact between the child and each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child;

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Children's Law Reform Act as above to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their parents and grandparents."

As I agree with this, I shall sign it and send it to the clerks' table.

### SALES TAX

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I have a petition to implement a sales tax holiday for vehicle sales, similar to what my father did as Treasurer in 1980. I shall read the petition. It reads:

"Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the auto industry in Ontario and throughout North America is experiencing a major restructuring; and

"Whereas the current economic crisis is affecting the auto manufacturers and the front-line dealerships throughout Ontario; and

"Whereas many potential automobile purchasers are having difficulty accessing credit even at current prices; and

"Whereas a three-month tax holiday of GST and the PST on the purchase of new and used cars and trucks would stimulate auto sales;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the provincial and federal governments to implement a three-month tax

holiday and that the Ontario Minister of Finance include the PST holiday in the next provincial budget.”

I support this petition.

### MULTIPLE MYELOMA

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Health Canada has approved the use of Revlimid for patients with multiple myeloma, an incurable form of cancer; and

“Whereas Revlimid is a vital new treatment that must be accessible to all patients in Ontario for this life-threatening cancer of the blood cells; and

“Whereas multiple myeloma is treatable with the proper therapies, thereby giving hope to the 2,000 Canadians diagnosed annually;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Immediately provide Revlimid as a choice for patients with multiple myeloma and their health care providers in Ontario through public funding.”

I absolutely agree with this and affix my signature hereto.

### MULTIPLE MYELOMA

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Health Canada has approved the use of Revlimid for patients with multiple myeloma, an incurable form of cancer; and

“Whereas Revlimid is a vital new treatment that must be accessible to all patients in Ontario for this life-threatening cancer of the blood cells; and

“Whereas multiple myeloma is treatable with the proper therapies, thereby giving hope to the 2,000 Canadians diagnosed annually;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Immediately provide Revlimid as a choice for patients with multiple myeloma and their health care providers in Ontario through public funding.”

As I agree with this petition, I will affix my signature and send it to the centre desk.

### CHILD CARE

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I have a petition I received from the Windermere Women’s Institute, and I shall read it.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services, Madeleine Meilleur, has decided that grandparents caring for their grandchildren no longer qualify for temporary care assistance; and

“Whereas the removal of the temporary care assistance could mean that children will be forced into foster care; and

“Whereas the temporary care assistance amounted to \$231 per month, much less than a foster family would receive to look after the same children if they were forced into foster care;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately reverse the decision to remove temporary care assistance for grandparents looking after their grandchildren.”

I will affix my signature to this petition.

### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly, signed by my neighbours from all over western Mississauga—in Streetsville, Meadowvale and Lisgar. It reads as follows:

“Whereas wait times for access to surgical procedures in the western GTA area served by the Mississauga Halton LHIN are growing despite the vigorous capital project activity at the hospitals within the Mississauga Halton LHIN boundaries; and

“Whereas ‘day surgery’ procedures could be performed in an off-site facility, thus greatly increasing the ability of surgeons to perform more procedures, alleviating wait times for patients, and freeing up operating theatre space in hospitals for more complex procedures that may require post-operative intensive care unit support and a longer length of stay in hospital;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care allocate funds in its 2008-09 capital budget to begin planning and construction of an ambulatory surgery centre located in western Mississauga to serve the Mississauga-Halton area and enable greater access to ‘day surgery’ procedures that comprise about four fifths of all surgical procedures performed.”

I am very pleased to sign and to support this petition, and to ask my page, Andrej Rosic of Lisgar, to carry it for me.

### FIREARMS CONTROL

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I have a petition from the students and staff of Yorkdale Adult Learning Centre. It’s a petition in support of Bill 56.

“Say No to Drive-by Shootings and Illegal Guns in Cars....

“Whereas there are a growing number of drive-by shootings and gun crimes in our communities;

“Whereas only police officers, military personnel and lawfully licensed persons are allowed to possess handguns;

“Whereas a growing number of illegal handguns are transported, smuggled and being found in cars driven in our communities;

“Whereas impounding cars and suspending driver’s licences of persons possessing illegal guns on the spot by police will make our communities safer;



"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 56, a bill proposed by MPP Mike Colle and entitled the Unlawful Firearms in Vehicles Act, 2008, into law so that we can reduce the number of drive-by shootings and gun crimes in our communities."

I support this petition and affix my name to it.

### LUPUS

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** I'm pleased to introduce this petition on behalf of the Lupus Foundation of Ontario, signed by many people from Ridgeway, Crystal Beach and Stevensville. The petition reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas systemic lupus erythematosus is under-recognized as a global health problem by the public, health professionals and governments, driving the need for greater awareness;

"Whereas medical research on lupus and efforts to develop safer and more effective therapies for the disease are underfunded in comparison with diseases of comparable magnitude and severity;

"Whereas no new safe and effective drugs for lupus have been introduced in more than 40 years. Current drugs for lupus are very toxic and can cause other life-threatening health problems that can be worse than the primary disease;

1350

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to assist financially with media campaigns to bring about knowledge of systemic lupus ... and the signs and symptoms of this disease to all citizens of Ontario. We further petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to provide funding for research currently being undertaken in lupus clinics throughout Ontario."

I'm pleased to sign my signature in support of this petition.

### TOM LONGBOAT

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I have a petition from the good people of Six Nations and their chief, William Montour, whose grandfather was a great friend of Tommy Longboat.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Tom Longboat, a proud son of the Onondaga Nation, was one of the most internationally celebrated athletes in Canadian history; and

"Whereas Tom Longboat was voted as the number one Canadian athlete of the 20th century by Maclean's magazine for his record-breaking marathon and long-distance triumphs against the world's best; and

"Whereas Tom Longboat fought for his country in World War I and was wounded twice during his tour of duty; and

"Whereas Tom Longboat is a proud symbol of the outstanding achievements and contributions of Canada's aboriginal people;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to recognize June 4 as Tom Longboat Day in Ontario."

I sign this petition in support, along with the good people of Six Nations and Chief William Montour.

### COMMUNITY MEDIATION

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** I have a petition, and I just want to recognize Mr. Sheikh Motalieb, who is here today from the riding of Scarborough Southwest. The petition is addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly and reads as follows:

"Whereas many types of civil disputes may be resolved through community mediation delivered by trained mediators, who are volunteers who work with the parties in the dispute; and

"Whereas Inter-Cultural Neighbourhood Social Services established the Peel Community Mediation Service in 1999 with support from the government of Ontario through the Trillium Foundation, the Rotary Club of Mississauga West and the United Way of Peel, and has proven the viability and success of community mediation; and

"Whereas the city of Mississauga and the town of Caledon have endorsed the Peel Community Mediation Service, and law enforcement bodies refer many cases to the Peel Community Mediation Service as an alternative to a court dispute; and

"Whereas court facilities and court time are both scarce and expensive, the cost of community mediation is very small and the extra expense incurred for lack of community mediation in Peel region would be much greater than the small annual cost of funding community mediation;

"Be it therefore resolved that the government of Ontario, through the Ministry of the Attorney General, support and fund the ongoing service delivery of the Peel Community Mediation Service through Inter-Cultural Neighbourhood Social Services."

I agree with this petition—I hope we set the same thing up in Scarborough—and I affix my signature to it.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### FAMILY STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2009

#### LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LE DROIT DE LA FAMILLE

Resuming the debate adjourned on February 19, 2009, on the motion for second reading of Bill 133, An Act to amend various Acts in relation to certain family law



matters and to repeal the Domestic Violence Protection Act, 2000 / *Projet de loi 133, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne des questions de droit de la famille et abrogeant la Loi de 2000 sur la protection contre la violence familiale.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** [*inaudible*] I have this opportunity as critic for the NDP [*inaudible*] very, very important bit of legislation. I truly believe that this warrants a broad and thorough consideration, not just here in this legislative chamber but in the committee process.

I also want to thank the Attorney General for abiding by the tradition and protocol of either he or his parliamentary assistant being here when one of his bills is going through the process. Some newer members don't understand that that is a very important tradition, and have, from time to time—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd just ask the honourable member: Your earpiece around the mike is causing some challenges. I know that you especially, as an honourable member, do not want to cause a health and safety issue for any of our interpreters.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** [*inaudible*] providing feedback that was totally inappropriate and unwarranted.

As I say, I was complimenting the Attorney General for abiding by that protocol, and I know that his colleagues take note of that and will ensure, I'm sure, that either the minister or his or her parliamentary assistant sit through this very important process.

There are basically three parts of this bill that I want to speak to. One is the legislative amendments that deal with the valuation of a pension, of a defined benefit pension, because these are going to be controversial. I'm worried that that particular set of amendments may end up flying under the radar. There's been a cry in the legal community for a simplification of what can become a very expensive actuarial process and a contested one to boot, but I'm not sure that the legislation, especially in the context of 2009, where defined benefit pension plans are diminishing in their number—and they're also diminishing in terms of funding.

I want to speak to the repeal of the Domestic Violence Protection Act of 2000. That was supported by all three parties in this House after some considerable committee hearing. Of course, I want to speak to the amendments to the Children's Law Reform Act. While I acknowledge that the Attorney General noted the name of that little girl, that tragic victim Katelynn Sampson, as did Ms. Elliott when she spoke on behalf of the Conservatives, I note also that she was referred to very sotto voce, perhaps but in passing.

When I speak to the amendments to the Children's Law Reform Act, I know that Ms. DiNovo, my colleague from Parkdale-High Park, has a strong interest in this, not just as a justice advocate, because this girl was her constituent. She knew the community, she knew the three people, so she has a strong interest not just as a justice advocate but as the MPP for this little girl.

It's especially noteworthy that here we are—why, this morning, question period was dominated, at least from the New Democrats' point of view, by questions about the inability of the province of Ontario to protect children in its care: 90 kids dead, children, babies, young teens, and the vast majority of those deaths preventable, according to our province's child and youth advocate. Irwin Elman, our child and youth advocate for the province of Ontario, who has been frustrated at every step of the way trying to investigate concerns around the safety and welfare and health of children in the custody of the state—blocked at every opportunity; given no opportunity—has also, as we all know, called for an inquiry into the death; oh, let's not dignify it by calling it a death. It was a brutal murder of Katelynn Sampson. The 20-year veteran homicide detective sergeant who found Katelynn's body said she suffered severe and complicated injuries that he characterized as among the worst that he had seen in those two decades as a Toronto police officer. Katelynn Sampson died a brutal, painful and oh-so-undignified death.

I want to address the matter of pensions first, and I want to appreciate or acknowledge the assistance of an actuary down in Welland, Jamie Jocsak, who has written to me about Bill 133, whom I have had the opportunity to speak with and who has provided some very strong guidance for me in response to this bill. I know that my colleague Ms. Elliott addressed this portion of the bill. As I say, I think it's very important that this part of the bill dealing with pension valuations doesn't end up under the radar or swept aside, which is why we need full public hearings. I have no doubt we're going to want to hear from members from the family law bar, family lawyers, matrimonial lawyers. We're also going to want to hear from the actuaries who have been doing this work and from people who have experienced some of the problems. We acknowledge, everybody here acknowledges, that pension valuation, in a perfect world, would be as simple as the determination of child support using the federal and provincial child support scales. But it's not that straightforward.

1400

Let me give you an example. You know, down where I come from—you were down there this weekend, Speaker, monitoring the Conservative policy convention and trying to scoop press wherever you could. That's your job. Don't think the Tories don't do it to the Liberals or the NDP. I've done it myself a few times. You did get some press, and I congratulate you for that. But down in Niagara where we've lost industry after industry after industry and sadly, where we see successive governments not recognize this as the proverbial canary in the coal mine, we've seen industries collapse; the "Oh, too big to fail" type of industries like Atlas Steel with defined benefit pension plans and seriously underfunded pension pools.

So here's the scenario as it has been related to me by more than a few Atlas Steel workers who have suffered matrimonial breakdowns, divorces—who have had their



pension valuation determined as if, indeed, it was a too-big-to-fail type of company and the pension plan were fully funded—who pay out their spouses, and, as Ms. Elliott noted on Thursday, the two big items in most matrimonial breakdowns are the family home and the pension plan. These workers paid out 50% of the value of their pension plans, so what you've got to do is—you know what you've got to do—you've got to borrow the money, finance something. Most people don't have that kind of cash sitting around. But then they're only getting 30% or 40% with a defined benefit because the pension plan was underfunded.

So right off the bat, calling upon a plan administrator to provide a valuation creates some problems. I put to you that most plan administrators aren't going to want to acknowledge that the plan is failing or collapsing. Most plan administrators are going to want to embellish their own credibility as plan administrators. The fact is that in these very, very troubled economic times, the actual value of a pension can vary day by day as the stock markets take their toll on pension plans' investments.

I want to make reference to some of the comments relayed to me by Jamie Jocsak. I think they're very valuable, I think they're important, and I've encouraged him to participate in public hearings. He has assured me that he will be dealing with his colleagues and the national body of actuaries to address this bill. I encourage them to make sure that they find themselves on the list of people entitled to make presentations.

One of the points he makes, which I find very interesting, is his surprise to read that Bill 133 proposes that the pension plan administrator determine the value of the defined benefit pension on marriage breakdown in accordance with a set of regulations. As Mr. Jocsak says, "this approach was considered and dismissed by the Law Commission of Ontario in its recommendations released in September 2008." Indeed, he refers us to page 14 of that report. I thank him for that research; it made my life a little easier.

He points out that the "issues regarding the valuation of pensions on divorce are very technical and unlikely to draw a large amount of public attention" but that "the valuation methodology has a very significant impact on the value assigned to the pension at separation." Of course it does; that's the whole point. "Differences in methodologies can change the value of a defined benefit pension by 100% or more. When one considers the fact that the value of the pension for a person close to retirement can be worth several hundred thousand dollars and as such is often the couple's most valuable asset, the financial impact of the proposed bill for divorcing couples could be substantial."

Those are the kinds of admonitions that I take very seriously because they are not partisan or over the top. They are rational, thoughtful considerations.

He goes on to talk about the financial impact of the proposed legislation, which could vary depending upon the age of the person who's a member of the pension plan and the years left before their date of retirement.

He notes that the bill "does provide a welcome increase in flexibility for divorcing couples by allowing an immediate lump sum transfer from a registered pension plan to the non-member spouse when the pension is not in payment. This increased flexibility, however, could be implemented regardless of whether the pension valuation methodology is changed." Of course it could. "In fact, there currently exists such a scheme in Canada. The federal Pension Benefits Division Act allows members of certain federal government pension plans to immediately transfer up to 50% of the value of their defined benefit pension on a termination basis to the non-member spouse." This, of course, relieves them of the obligation of having to generate cash right then and there in what is a very difficult and a very expensive process for most divorcing couples.

Let me tell you, divorces are not cheap. They take huge tolls and, at the end of the day, the lawyers have the money. That's in a scenario we're talking about where we want to, of course, provide flexibility if parties are in agreement, so that isn't not a need to put cash on the barrelhead right then and there.

But I am very concerned about the methodology and the fact that the government will say, I believe, that this will be addressed in regulation. I'm concerned about the tendency of a pension administrator to want to err on the side of, oh, self-interest and not acknowledge that that pension is perhaps in trouble or even in serious trouble, where you have the capacity—look, if General Motors goes down, we've got the largest unfunded liability in terms of pensions. Even if the government were to accept the NDP's proposal to increase the pension benefit guarantee fund to \$2,500 a month, you're going to see a serious shortfall in pensions. I am hard-pressed to even imagine the billions of dollars or the capacity of the province to fulfill the moral responsibility that it would have. It would be catastrophic.

When I talked to Mr. Jocsak earlier today, I suggested to him that the proposal might have been fine and good 40 years ago when defined benefit pension plans were probably peaking in terms of number and in fact were very stable, and where you could do this sort of evaluation with a lot more confidence than you can now where the real value changes. It's fluid. It's extremely unstable. I'm sure that Jamie Jocsak and others of his profession will be before the committee to comment on that. I would invite and encourage the government and government members to listen carefully.

I'm going to be taking a closer look at the law reform commission and its recommendations, and I know that Ms. Elliott and I are going to have some interesting conversations not just with each other but with government members and with people appearing before that committee when it sits.

You know that I'm not a big fan of MPPs junketing around anywhere, but it seems to me that when you have some of the very special problems, not just with the pension issue—and I'm going to talk about this more as we get into the repeal of the Domestic Violence Pro-



tection Act and then also the amendments to the Children's Law Reform Act. We've got a whole chunk of this province that's very isolated. I've been up to places like Peawanuck and Attawapiskat with my colleague Gilles Bisson. One other part around domestic violence: A whole lot of these towns don't have jails. They've got de facto jails, but there are no locks on the doors. If a spouse gets arrested for beating the daylight out of his wife, there's no place for him to be put or to go. You're talking about one-cop towns. We have some very special issues around domestic violence in those isolated, remote communities—no women's shelters, no advocacy for women.

1410

So let's talk about the repeal of the domestic violence protection legislation of 2000—and I remember it well. As I indicated earlier, it underwent some pretty thorough committee consideration. I have no quarrel with Bill 133 and the power of a Family Court to issue a restraining order; no quarrel with that whatsoever. But understand that the matter has to be before the court for that to happen, that there have to be the applications done, and process, and you have to wait for your first court date. And I'm going to talk about the Jarvis Street Family Court—you bet your boots I am—because we can't not talk about it. But, like others here, I've been in a whole whack of these Family Courts across the province. They're sausage factories. People are lined up. The dockets that judges deal with in these courts are these huge, huge sheets of three or four pages tacked up on the bulletin boards. We're going to talk about that, too, I hope, in the course of the next 40 minutes.

The wonderful thing about the legislation of 2000 is that it provided for an ex parte application for a restraining order, a much more limited order than could be made with an on-notice application, but the other party had an opportunity to go there. It was a 24/7 proposal. Others can stand up and correct me if I'm wrong, but one of the problems at the time in terms of enacting it, proclaiming it—we passed it—was the number of JPs available, because it was going to use justices of the peace. We had an incredible opportunity to develop a very specialized JP role, hopefully highly sensitized to the issues of domestic violence. What would happen is that, under urgent circumstances, if a person—but let's face it; not too many men get beaten black and blue by their spouses, by their wives. Well, they don't. Somebody's going to call me and say, "Well, I was," and I'm sure you were. But the reality of domestic violence is that that doesn't tend to—we're talking about women. The legislation of 2000 that's being repealed would have permitted that woman to, either on her own in a taxicab or taken by the police or taken by an advocacy group, at 2 in the morning get a restraining order.

Let's face it: Restraining orders in and of themselves have dubious value. It's symbolic. It's like legislation that one private member, for whom I have a great deal of respect—he wants to make it illegal to carry an illegal gun in your car, so you can suspend the licence of the

driver. The guy's got an illegal gun in his car. You think he gives a tinker's dam that he's going to get his licence suspended? He's out there ready to shoot somebody and all of a sudden he's going to say, "Oh, boy, I'd better not put this gun in this car, because if I get stopped they'll suspend my licence?" I don't want his licence suspended; I want his butt busted and I want him thrown in jail. For Pete's sake, how silly. This overreliance on restraining orders—we don't have to go very far or look very deep to find women killed by spouses against whom there's a restraining order. I appreciate what they do do. If a woman is being harassed or threatened by her husband, under the law as it stands now, were it proclaimed, she could go before a JP and get a restraining order so that if her husband shows up around the house, the police can at least arrest him. But let's be clear: Restraining orders in and of themselves don't stop women from being murdered; not by a long shot.

I find it troubling that the government is repealing the 2000 legislation rather than sitting down and trying to find ways of making it meaningful and effective to the extent that it can be—because it's there. It has been debated. It was supported by all three parties here at Queen's Park. There was unanimity in its value. It earned critical and rigorous scrutiny. Women's groups supported it. Advocates for abused women supported it. I'm not sure that they understand what's happening with this legislation now, because, again, giving the Family Court the power to make a Criminal Code-enforceable restraining order—fine and good; we support that. Of course we're going to vote for that part of the bill. But why are you repealing legislation that could have ratcheted up the level of protection for a woman at risk by giving her immediate access to a JP—hopefully, a JP who is trained in domestic violence matters? Because do you know what that also means? It means she's more likely to get referred to a shelter, for instance. It means that she's more likely to get referred to a family law clinic, if a family law clinic exists in her community. It means that she's more likely to have the cops show up in a timely way than the woman who doesn't have access to these things. I don't think it's unfair on my part at all to make that observation.

As I say, restraining orders don't protect women's lives—but sometimes they help. So New Democrats are going to be pretty vigilant about questioning the repeal of that legislation, especially when it was never put into practice. We haven't even had a chance to test it.

I'll make a deal with you right now: Enact it, get it going, and we'll commit to a one-day passage of a bill repealing it, if it could be demonstrated in two and a half years' time that it's not working. There—on the record. Why wouldn't you?

It's a very, very dramatic step backwards in the ever-present need for the state to protect women and kids, the moral responsibility of the state to protect its victims: women and kids.

Shall we, then, talk about Katelynn Sampson, a seven-year-old girl who was savagely, brutally, attacked, one



can only assume, over a period of time? It's a safe assumption at this point, in view of the types of injuries that were reported by the police homicide detectives who arrived. The two custodial parents are charged—oh, I understand, they're charged. But the charges, as I understand, as well, have been yanked up to first-degree murder from second-degree. The people who were charged with her murder weren't her parents. They hadn't abducted her. They didn't steal little Katelynn off the streets. The state, to the authority of the court, signed off on seven-year-old Katelynn Sampson and, with all the authority and all the seals and all the flourishes of signatures, sent her to her brutal death, her slaughter. She might as well have been sent to an abattoir.

I listened carefully to the Attorney General on Thursday. I commend him for making reference to Katelynn Sampson. You couldn't not make reference to her. It's the elephant in the room.

1420

I heard the Attorney General, and I of course pulled the Hansard, make reference to the fact that the judge had limited tools. With respect, sir, I beg to differ. Look, I've earned some ill will from parts out there in the community for having been critical of this process—not a whole lot. Most of the e-mails and most of the calls are ones that are commending the NDP for keeping on this.

You know I'm not a judge-basher. You know that full well. I don't support propositions like electing judges or propositions like auditing their annual sentences. I voted against these types of propositions that have come from time to time from private members. I also have a great deal of respect for the fact that the appeal process is how you address a judge's error, but there was nobody to appeal this judge's decision.

Katelynn had no voice. Oh, she should have. There were people there down at 311 Jarvis. Go down there or to any other provincial courthouse in this province, family or criminal. You've got people engaged in, again, acrimonious domestic disputes, and women have to sit across the hallway from the guy who beat them up a week ago, waiting to get into court and then being told, "Well, it's 5 o'clock. We're going to have to adjourn your case to a week or two weeks from now." And, yes, it's usually women. Look, call me if you want to, but please, it's usually women, because they tend to be the poorer partner in domestic breakdowns, who have to go to the legal aid office to get a certificate to get legal representation. There are very few family lawyers, especially experienced ones—and we want experienced lawyers working for these people—who will take on a legal aid family law case. One, the hourly rate is just atrocious. Oh, no, I'm not supporting this government's commitment to \$800-an-hour Bay Street lawyers, but I do expect competent lawyers to be financially rewarded for their work and to be compensated for the expenses they incur: their staff, their paralegals, their research and constant upgrading.

We've got these sausage-factory courthouses, hard-working court staff. Look, I've known a lot of judges in

my lifetime, and I know a whole lot more by reputation, let's say. We've got probably the best bench anywhere in the world at our provincial level and at our federal level. I have no hesitation in saying that. I think Ms. Elliott, who's a lawyer, would agree with me.

Oh, I've known the occasional judge who was a drunk and a derelict. Back when I first started practising law, the courthouse in Welland was upstairs at the city hall, and the judge, who had been a crown attorney prior to his appointment—this will help clear the name of other judges who weren't crown attorneys before their appointment and who didn't practise up there—would pass out at 10:30 in the morning in his chambers. So in the court, we'd be sitting there—I was just a young lawyer; I didn't want to be presumptuous—waiting and waiting, and finally the court clerk would talk to him and he'd come to and come out. But he was one of those judges, I recall, where, first of all—when he convicted youthful offenders, I heard him say more than once, "And if I didn't have a reasonable doubt, I'd be sending you to jail instead of simply fining you." You know what that means, don't you? If a judge didn't have a reasonable doubt, he would've—"Good thing I have a reasonable doubt, because this way I'm just imposing a fine." Also the practice was—you're too young; jeez, you weren't even thought of yet—of judges to say, "And where the evidence of the accused is at odds with the evidence of the police officer, I accept the evidence of the police officer"—real classy stuff, right? This is old days. Things have changed dramatically.

One of the things that judges have to do—they're told by the Court of Appeal—is that they have to give reasons for believing or not believing a witness. Am I fair in that one, Ms. Elliott? The Court of Appeal has been very clear. The Court of Appeal says that you simply can't say, "I find you guilty." You've got to explain why. The Court of Appeal has implied as much about "I find you not guilty." You've got to explain why.

I've read the court file of Katelynn Sampson. Nobody got an explanation—nobody. The judge never even saw the child. The judge never had the child brought before her, and this was an experienced judge. As I say, people think that my concern about this judge is somehow some sort of personal attack. Well, I beg to differ. But I got an e-mail just the other day from the legal counsel for the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto, chastising me for criticizing this judge in a very angry way.

She has Catholic Children's Aid Society letterhead all over the e-mail, in colour, and she goes on to say, "I'm not speaking for the Catholic Children's Aid Society; this is personal." Not the smartest thing I've ever seen somebody do. Why didn't you send me a personal e-mail? Good God. Quite frankly, I discredit the criticism just a titch.

I would say to her, Ms. Counsel for the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto, why wouldn't the judge utilize the powers given him or her in the Children's Law Reform Act? Why wouldn't the judge comply with the mandatory requirements of the existing Children's Law Reform Act?



Section 24: In hearing an application for custody, "The court shall consider"—it doesn't say "may"; it's not discretionary—"shall consider all the child's needs and circumstances, including,

"(a) the love, affection and emotional ties between the child and,

"(i) each person ... claiming custody of ... the child,

"(ii) other members of the child's family who reside with the child, and

"(iii) persons involved in the child's care and upbringing...."

"Shall," not "may" or "if you're inclined" or "if you've got the time, and if you don't have the time, don't bother."

Well, as long as I've got the transcripts of that court process, nobody ever asked that child what her relationship was with the proposed custodial parent and her spouse/boyfriend. "The court"—section 24 of the existing legislation—"shall consider ... the child's views and preferences, if they can reasonably be ascertained." Read the transcript.

I say to Catholic Children's Aid Society legal counsel, you tell me why a judge failed to comply with the requirement of section 24: The judge "shall consider all the child's needs and circumstances, including....

"(c) the length of time the child has lived in a stable home environment;

"(d) the ability and willingness of each person applying for custody of the child to provide the child with guidance and education, the necessities of life and any special needs of the child...."

Nobody even asked the applicant for custody whether the child would have its own bed, never mind its own bedroom. Nobody asked what the financial capacity of the family was to care for that child, to feed that child. "The court shall consider all the child's needs and circumstances"—"shall", not "may"—"including....

"(f) the permanence and stability of the family unit with which it is proposed that the child will live;" and

"(g) the ability of each person applying for custody ... to act as a parent." Read the transcript.

1430

Madam—you, Catholic Children's Aid Society lawyer, who uses the Catholic Children's Aid Society letterhead to send me an e-mail and then says: "But I'm not speaking for the Catholic Children's Aid Society"—you tell me why the court didn't make any of those inquiries of anybody. It treated the placement of that child as though somebody was going down to the motor vehicle office, as if I was selling Ms. DiNovo my old 1991 Buick and we were signing off ownership. This is the law as it stands.

I go to section 30 of the existing legislation, the Children's Law Reform Act: "The court before which an application is brought in respect of custody"—yes, like the application by Irving for the custody of Katelynn—"... by order, may appoint a person who has technical or professional skill to assess and report to the court on the

needs of the child and the ability and willingness of the parties ... to satisfy the needs of the child."

It was entirely within that court's jurisdiction to direct that the Children's Aid Society do an assessment of the proposed custodial family. So you, Ms. Catholic Children's Aid legal counsel, tell me why the court didn't do that. For the life of me, I cannot understand why there hasn't been more concern about the failure of that court to apply and use the jurisdiction that it had, to use the laws that exist to protect that child. At the very least there is, in Canada, along with a whole lot of other similar types of legal jurisdiction, the *parens patriae* jurisdiction of the court, an inherent jurisdiction, to protect the vulnerable, including children.

Look, I'm going to concede that I referred this matter to the Ontario Judicial Council, and the Ontario Judicial Council declined to consider the judge's conduct as misconduct. That's fine. I'm not saying she was drunk at the time; I'm not saying she was not rational; I'm just saying that that kid, Katelynn, had very few other people around to protect her interests.

Any one of you, if you talked to Katelynn's mother—let's say that on a bus from here to Hamilton you happened to be sitting beside her, and she told you that she had a drug problem—because the court did know she had a drug problem—and that she was giving up custody of her child because she didn't feel capable of caring for that child—because the court knew that. You'd have said, "Well, who's helping you with your drug problem? Are you involved in rehab? This is still your child." You, sitting beside this woman on the bus as an absolute stranger, would be interested enough to say: "Have you thought about calling A, B, or C? Do the people down at the Addiction Research Foundation over on Russell Street have maybe something that could help? Have you talked to your pastor? Have you talked to a lawyer? Oh, by the way, who are these people that you are giving your child to? Describe these 15-year friends."

The court was told that. The child's only seven. The proposed custodial parent, the applicant, misidentifies the child's natural father. Hmm, real good friends. You see, Ms. Sampson is a committed self-confessed drug addict. What is going on? How come no bells were ringing? How come no red flags were shooting up? Jeez, drug addicts tend to associate, well, with other drug addicts. It's the nature of the beast.

So we've got legislation now that's going to provide for a criminal record check. The problem with that, though, again, is sort of like restraining orders. A criminal record says something, but the absence of a criminal record doesn't say anything, does it? The fact that you don't have a criminal record doesn't give you a clean bill of health when you're taking care of a seven-year-old little girl who the court knew was having serious trouble in school, with serious behavioural problems. How come that didn't ring any bells?

Then you have a court worker with the aboriginal legal services attending with the—don't forget, the court has never seen the child. The court only sees mother on



one occasion; she doesn't show up the next two occasions. Then you've got a court worker from aboriginal legal services assisting Irving in her legal effort to acquire guardianship of Katelynn, attending two court hearings and addressing the court. Her supervisor at aboriginal legal services says it's not her job to determine whether Irving was a good caretaker—bullfeathers. I reject that and I resent that. You've got a kid who's being handed around like chattel. Some adult had to pay attention and step in.

My concern, and I have no idea whether it's true, is that this rather casual, perfunctory model is not the exclusive style of but one judge in Family Court in Toronto. Because part of the rationale of some of the people who have criticized me for expressing concern is that, well, these were two adults making a decision. No, it's two adults, and one child who had nobody speaking for her. Children are not chattel and children deserve the protection—of all the places where a child should have been safe, it should be in a Family Court room where you've got judges who deal with horrible horror stories like this and who've seen the worst; also the best, but are burdened by dealing with the worst. Here's Katelynn—no voice; she's not even there. No evidence under oath; the conversations are so brief and simplistic: "Oh, she's your good friend. Been a long-time friend? Okay, good; here"—slam, bam, thank you, ma'am. Well, no thank you.

Katelynn wasn't hit by a car that was speeding. She didn't contract some of those horrible youthful diseases that, from time to time, cause death. One can only infer, from what the investigating homicide officer said, that she was brutally, brutally slaughtered after a court had signed off on her placement to that family. Attorney General, this is my concern. It's not just about the legislation. It's about what's going on in our courtrooms. It's about our failure to take our duties, our responsibilities as adults to children, seriously.

Speaker, you're an educated man. You know full well the responsibility that the law has put on people in positions of authority to report the prospect of child abuse, don't you? We have serious consequences for adults who don't report. Ms. Broten's got a bill before the Legislature that will require people who discover child porn on a computer, and I presume she's suggesting that it goes for computer repair shops—it will make it illegal for them not to report it to the police. We're going to support that bill. At the very least, it's symbolic of our recognition of our responsibility to children: not just to our children and not just to the children down the street, but to all of our children.

1440

The legislation proposes that there be affidavit evidence. My concern is that the problem may not be so much the law as it is the processes—what's happening or not happening in our overburdened Family Courts and our failure to elevate children's interests and prioritize them and to say, "Those interests will prevail over all others." I admit, heck, what do I know? I'm not one of

these downtown-Toronto lawyers. I'm not some \$250,000-a-year judge. Heck, I just do my best on a daily basis; you know that. But having two parents, two adults, in your courtroom talking about a child who's being given up by her mother because she's a drug addict, and who's having problems in school: Isn't that *prima facie* a child in need of protection? In and of itself, a child whose parent can't care for her or him is a child in need of protection. It's not rocket science; it's common sense, and it just means a little bit of caring, and it means maybe saving just one life.

But nobody—the court worker didn't see anything wrong with this. "Well, it's not my job." The judge apparently didn't see anything wrong with this—"It's not my job"—notwithstanding the law. The Ontario Judicial Council says, "Well, the judge didn't misbehave." Who am I to argue with them? All I know is what I know and, by God, there should be a provincial shame and rage about Katelynn Sampson.

The argument, "Well, if we have too rigorous a process for giving up custody, more people will engage in informal custody arrangements"—they already did. Katelynn was already in that home on an informal basis. Here is the chance for the state to intervene. This was a golden opportunity, but nobody thought it was their responsibility. Good God. Once again, if you suspected your neighbour of beating his dog, you'd call the humane society; I know you would. If you suspected your upstairs tenant of not leaving water out for the cat, you'd call the humane society; I know you would. A seven-year-old girl, the daughter of a drug addict, being handed over in a courtroom, being handed over, and the court engaging in a process that's the law of Ontario that gave the court powers and even required the court to do that list of things that I told you—it gave the court the authority to order an assessment of the proposed home. I know how simple it would have been, but because in the interests of expediency—the court has forms. You're familiar with these; you're a lawyer. So that the judge doesn't get fatigue and doesn't get carpal tunnel from writing too much, there are boxes for the judge to check off, like "Request assistance of children's lawyer from the Ministry of the Attorney General." It would have been entirely appropriate in this instance.

It was already written out. All she had to do—nope, not even an X, just a tick mark, the opportunity to order an assessment once again right there, the opportunity to advise children's aid that here was a little girl who had been being raised—if you can call it that—by a drug addict who admitted to not being able to care for her daughter. I have to give Bernice Sampson credit for that. She's a drug addict. Drug addicts don't think rationally.

This legislation will require affidavit evidence. Is it going to be prepared by the same sort of court workers who assisted Donna Irving in her application for custody of Miss Sampson? Is a person who's apparently as careless about other people's lives as Ms. Irving going to care whether she lies in an affidavit?

I tell you, if we're going to do something meaningful, and if the courts won't use the powers given to them,



then we will make them use those powers. Every single case of custody should involve an assessment—every one. Don't start talking to me about, "Some people would appear not to need one." You know what? Child abuse is not restricted to any income bracket or to any age bracket or to any cultural group or to any part of the city, and we shouldn't be thinking about it in those terms. To a trained person who knows what it means to write up an assessment, they may in short order be able to reach conclusions that constitute a professional bit of advice to the court. Others may require more.

The legislation would require a court clerk to inquire of children's aid societies whether or not somebody had involvement with the children's aid society. Again, this is cosmetic stuff—looks good, feels good. People have violent capacities and an inability to care for others who have never been near a children's aid worker.

I, for one, am so distressed by the inconsistency of the conduct of children's aid societies from community to community that I really believe that that Victorian model of child care should be abandoned and that the protection of children should be a direct service of the state, with direct political accountability to the minister in charge, because we know what happens in this chamber when we come forward with concerns about a children's aid society: "They're private corporations." "The ministry has no control over them." "Don't talk to me"—the old Pontius Pilate again, huh? There's been more than a little bit of blood that's had to be washed off hands when it comes to children and women in this province.

We believe that every custody application should require an assessment. We believe that every child in a custody application—every child—should be present in court, or at least directly represented by counsel who knows that that child even exists and the condition that he or she is in and can give evidence to that effect. Why wouldn't the court have asked for Katelynn Sampson to be brought to court? Judges do it all the time: take the little girl into chambers, try to get—look, I respect judges who use their intuition. That intuitive knowledge is one of the most valuable tools that an experienced and good judge has. Good judges can sniff things out and spot things as if they were wizards. I've seen judges do it. It's a skill; it's a quality.

1450

This bill has to go to committee. I believe this government has a chance to beef this up. I believe the key is assessments. Every time there is an application for custody, I believe the key is in stronger and more effective representation of children, who have a right to counsel in these types of circumstances. I believe the key is us understanding that children are not chattels, the property of their parents, to be handed around and traded off as they wish, just because they're adults and they can make those decisions. I believe that we have to reinforce the *parens patriae* understanding of our courts. I also believe, as the children and youth advocate recommended at the time of this incredible betrayal of this little girl, that we have to have a whole inquiry as to what happened to

Katelynn Sampson. We have to understand why it happened, how it happened. How in God's name could it happen in Toronto? How could this happen? We've got to understand what the standard is for judges who are hearing these sorts of matters.

We also have to have Ombudsman oversight of family and children's services, children's aids. We also have to give the children and youth advocate in this province the resources, the tools, the legislative powers that it needs to conduct investigations, and then some impact as a result of those investigations.

We've sent Katelynn Sampson to her grave. Maybe, after having lost a little child, we can save a few more. Just maybe we can be bold enough and creative enough to accept our responsibilities as adults, and as members of a community—a community, a neighbourhood, a city, a town, a province—to accept our responsibilities to our children. Maybe we can start witnessing generations of Ontarians growing up as children not being abused, not being tortured, not being sexualized, not being turned into frail wrecks of human beings. Do you know what? Adult drug addicts come from somewhere, and as often as not, they come from those kinds of backgrounds. Women who are forced to prostitute themselves on the street come from somewhere, and usually it's that kind of background.

We should be using this legislative opportunity to confer, to declare, our respect for the sanctity of quality life for all Ontarians. I believe we have that chance. I'm not sure we will achieve it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Just to comment on a few of the points raised by my colleague from Welland. First of all, with respect to pensions, of course, they are often the most valuable asset, if they exist, in a family relationship. What the legislation does is no more and no less than this: The family should benefit from the value of the pensions, not those who would argue the case in court or who do the assessments. That's all this is about: leaving more of the value of pensions to those who were a family and are now going to become apart. That's what that's about: simplifying the process. I'm sure my friend would agree that we should simplify court process and not make it more complicated.

With respect to the Domestic Violence Protection Act, of the experts who spoke on our proposed amendments, Peter Jaffe is well known as somebody who stands for the protection of all people, in particular in his work for the Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children. He said, "I think this announcement is a breakthrough." Pam Cross, a well-known and well-respected advocate for women subjects of abuse, said, "We're thrilled with this package of family law reforms." Why? The Domestic Violence Protection Act and Bill 10 were simply not workable in the eyes of not only women's advocates, police, the courts. What we have proposed are legislative amendments that will provide broader protection—they don't require a



finding of domestic violence but only a reasonably based fear of it—and, secondly, stronger protection. With respect to the Katelynn Sampson tragedy, I'm sure my friend would not object to there being more information before the court and not less.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I'm pleased to add a few brief comments to what in my view were excellent remarks made by Mr. Kormos, the member from Welland. Let me say at the outset that I completely agree with the points he was making. It's not that the provisions of Bill 133 in and of themselves are objectionable; in most situations we agree with the ideas behind them and we commend the Attorney General for bringing them forward. But it's the way they're put into practice and the fact that there are so many missed opportunities here to make real, meaningful change.

With respect to the issue of domestic violence, we have a situation where the Domestic Violence Protection Act would have allowed for emergency intervention orders 24 hours a day, seven days a week. That's not what we're seeing with this legislation. From speaking to family law practitioners—and I understand many women's groups are also saying that there's nothing wrong with the changes proposed by Bill 133, but they're not going nearly far enough. We need to go much further to really protect victims of domestic violence, and it is, let's face it, primarily women. It's important enough that we really should have a stand-alone statute to deal with that, because we need to be much more proactive in preventing situations where women need to have those kinds of restraining orders in the first place. So often after the fact, when somebody has been killed, we keep saying that we need to do something more and more. So we would like to see this opportunity used to take the kinds of preventive measures that we really need to take.

I agree with Mr. Kormos on the situation with little Katelynn Sampson. There is a huge opportunity missed here. We need to make sure that children are given the protection they deserve, that their needs and wishes are elevated to the same level as adults' needs and wishes, and there's so much more that we need to do. That's why we're advocating for extensive committee hearings, and especially to travel to areas where we can meet with the people who really want to tell us their stories.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** We're all well aware of the eloquence of my friend from Welland, and he pointed out very clearly, and so did Mrs. Elliott, that this is a centimetre when we need a kilometre.

Katelynn Sampson was a member of my community, and perhaps the most vulnerable member in a very vulnerable community, because it is a vulnerable community. I know Bernice Sampson. For months and months she tried to get help with her addiction issue, but guess what? This is structural victimization. There was no help. There was no help for her mother and there was no help

for her daughter. There was no help for Holly Jones. There was no help for her family when she was murdered. And now they're asking us, because they are activists and they're involved, to bring forward a primary prevention program for our schools, yet this government is loath to do that. A million dollars is all it would cost across the entire province of Ontario.

Parkdale Public School: I know the principal there, I know the teachers; they're wonderful people. It is not in any way their fault, and they've been smeared in the press because of Katelynn Sampson's death. They phoned her home, and guess what they were told? They were told that she was up on the reserve, and they didn't have the funds, they didn't have the staff to send somebody out to check whether or not that was true. There was a time in our school system when they would have had somebody. But, because of the underfunding of our school system, they didn't have the staff. They didn't have the person. Where were social services? Where were they? They don't have the funding. They don't have the staff. That's why this happened.

Once a year it happens in Parkdale—High Park. Rose McGroarty, Holly Jones, Katelynn Sampson: Our only question in Parkdale is, who will be next? What child will be next? How many deaths will it take before this government wakes up and gives us the kind of legislation, the kind of action we need and the kind of funding we need so we can prevent this horror and this conversation from ever having to take place?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I am pleased to add my comments to those of my colleague from Welland. From one who is not a lawyer, I have to thank him for his very edifying hour exploring the scenarios and the conundrums of family law and some of the challenges that this bill, this proposed piece of legislation, is there to meet.

**1500**

He talked at length about a matter of concern for couples who are splitting: the past and the present—the risk to spouses, and the risk especially to children. He talked about the past and the present in custody battles. He talked a great deal about the future in the division of pension assets. He talked about the powers of the court and he talked about some of the things that the courts could do, some of the things the courts do now and some of the things that they could do better, many of which, if I understood him correctly, he agreed were addressed in the bill.

I do disagree with the member from Welland about the status of children's aid societies. He said that children's aid societies should be abolished. I tend to agree with Paul Zarnke, who runs the Peel Children's Aid Society. The CASs, the children's aid societies, do need an arm's-length relationship with the government to best serve those who need their services most, but in an area where I think the member from Welland and I are more on the same page than we are on different pages, I think that would be a minor point.



But when you boil it down, when you distill the value of the member's anecdotes and his passion, when you break down his arguments pro and con, I think we come down to the same point and the point that the Attorney General made: It would be better if there were more information before judges and not less, and that's what this bill does.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi):** Reply? Member from Welland.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Thank you, Speaker. I appreciate the generosity of people who responded to my brief comments.

Look, this is about, in no small part, protecting children. I think we are all on the same page when it comes to that. This is about ensuring that the child's best interests certainly prevail.

We've already got an Office of the Children's Lawyer working in the Ministry of the Attorney General, and they have a mandate to represent children and their interests. We've already got a court structure that purports to be a Family Court and to be able to address family matters. We've got children's aid societies coming out of our ears. We've got court support staff.

What we don't have yet is an acceptance of the integrity of the individuality of children. We don't have that yet. I fear that. We still consider children to be chattels, the property of their parents, and we don't, even now, accept the responsibility, the profound responsibility, for all of us to protect children from injury and harm. And you don't have to do it because you're a nice guy. Maybe you just do it because that's how you let young kids grow into healthy adults, and at the end of the day we're all better for it.

That's why we want this bill to go to committee. I would hope the government will keep an open mind, because there will be, in my view, a strong effort by both opposition parties to finish this bill, to complete it, to put some embellishments on it that make it even better, far better than what it is now.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi):** Further debate? The member for Mississauga—Streetsville.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Thank you very much, Speaker. I do stand with a certain measure of humility after listening to some acknowledged experts in this field: my colleague the Attorney General, who practised law with such distinction for so many years in London before he was elected, my colleague from Whitby—Oshawa, and my colleague from Welland—lawyers all. And, Speaker, this is your trade as well. So I am going to do my best as a non-lawyer to talk about something that is so important to those in Ontario who are themselves not lawyers.

When a family breaks up, when a home breaks up, it is indeed a tragedy, when people give up on the commitment that brought them together. What Bill 133 proposes to do is to update and modernize those tools and techniques that enable us to sort out the assets, sort out what's in the best interests of the children and to enable everyone to be able to get on with their lives and go forward in time, in peace and in security.

The main objectives of the proposed family law reform are to enhance the effectiveness and responsiveness of the family justice system in three primary ways: to better protect mostly, as most speakers have said, women and their children from domestic violence, and that comes down to the use of restraining orders; to help ensure that judgments take into account the best interests of children in custody; and finally, to support fairness for families when marriages break down, particularly as regards pension reform and child support.

I'd like to cover in the time available to me some of these topics and to discuss them from my vantage point of being an MPP who will deal in my constituency office with some of these matters, discussing them with some of my constituents for whom this is a real turning point in their lives. This is a point when a marriage that may have just begun a short time ago or a marriage that may have been the bedrock of their life has, for whatever reason, suddenly and permanently gone.

There's an awful lot of very thick and complex legalese that boils down to the essence of this bill, Bill 133, which is a surprisingly readable 20 pages. What Bill 133 comes down to is being able to do the right things at the right time for the right reasons.

Now, let's talk briefly about restraining orders. Bill 133 would strengthen the restraining order regulatory regime to improve, primarily, the security of women and their children who would face either the reality or the threat of domestic violence. What it says is that when a judge makes a restraining order, the restraining order needs to have teeth. Many of us as MPPs will have constituents come in and talk to us about matters relating to the Family Responsibility Office, and what it comes down to would be a court order, a restraining order, a judgment that doesn't have the means to enforce it and really doesn't penalize a partner who looks at a judgment, a court order or a restraining order and just ignores it. So Bill 133 sets out the teeth to enable that restraining order to happen.

What it says is that when a judge makes a restraining order, it has to be obeyed. So the proposed legislation sends a very clear and unambiguous message that restraining orders have to be obeyed, and it should act as a very effective deterrent. The restraining order provisions in Bill 133 would expand eligibility to protect those who have lived together as a couple for a fairly short time as opposed to what I understand is the current one, which is a relatively long time; in other words, less than three years. It would strengthen the enforcement by providing for breaches not merely to be pursued through civil litigation, in which one party sues the other, but by a violation of the Criminal Code, which would add an entire new level of deterrent if one party or the other chooses to flout a restraining order.

It's one thing to say, "Okay, I'm going to ignore the restraining order, so sue me." Suing somebody through civil litigation is a very time-consuming and very expensive process. It's one that just grinds you down, whether you're the plaintiff or whether you're the



defendant. On the other hand, if it's a violation of the Criminal Code, then somebody has to look very carefully into the mirror and say, "If I blow my top, if I do something inappropriate, I could go to jail." That's a deterrent, and that's an important one that doesn't exist now. I think that's a real, key enhancement that Bill 133 proposes to make.

1510

I'd like to talk a little bit about custody hearings. I think we can agree that there's a consensus, not merely in this legislative chamber but throughout the province of Ontario, that one of our priorities is to protect the most vulnerable members of our society. That's one of the bedrocks of Bill 133. How does it do that?

What Bill 133 says is that if there's a violent history that's relevant to the ability to care for a child, then it's important, as the Attorney General said in his response to the member from Welland, and as I concluded in my own, that better information be before a judge when making decisions about custody. That's kind of important.

Now, violence just isn't physical; violence cuts both ways. Words cause pain; words can be hurtful. Verbal abuse is violence. It's important for both female and male members to bear in mind that violence isn't simply one member or the other throwing something or doing physical harm. Violence is violence, regardless of how you're inflicting it.

The proposals in Bill 133 would better protect children by requiring, among other things, a sworn statement with information about what actually is in the child's best interests by either party who applies for custody of the children. It doesn't go by default that custody will reside with one side or the other. It allows a judge to be able to make a better-informed decision about custody on the basis of fuller information. I think, based upon the number of people who have come to talk to me, that that's an important step forward. I think that's one reason, if for no other, to support Bill 133.

The proposals in Bill 133, if a non-parent seeks custody, would require a police records check—what is today viewed as an exercise in due diligence that's fairly common—and it would also disclose the existence of prior children's aid society records—again, in the interests of putting all the relevant information before a judge prior to the judge making a decision that has ramifications over the longer term for the long-term best interests of the child, and similarly, for the ability of both partners in the former relationship to be able to get on with their lives and pursue them.

This would also mean that judges would have access to information about other family law cases that would involve the non-parent, if a non-parent is applying for custody. For example, if, for whatever reason, a non-parent is applying for custody of the children—in many cases, I guess the non-parent would very likely be a grandparent—and it comes to pass that neither parent is either able or willing to accept custody, this allows a judge to be able to make a better decision about the

ability of aunts and uncles or grandmothers and grandfathers to support and care for a child, based upon the best and fullest possible information and full disclosure of all the information relevant to making a decision about the custody of a child.

For so many people, one of the most important assets to be divided, as I said earlier—one of the things that's about the future—is child support and pension assets. Very often, the most valuable asset to be divided in a marriage at the time the relationship collapses is the pension assets of whichever party has been doing the best financially and has the greatest amassed pool of wealth, for want of a better expression. If you had been together for an appreciable amount of time, and that's going to get cut down the middle or cut however the pre-nuptial agreement says it will or however the judge decides that it should, then that too should be a decision made with the fullest possible disclosure and in the best interests of both parties and any children.

The proposed legislation in Bill 133 would make the law fairer for families that are going through this particular anguish, and this is probably where they spend the most number of billable hours on behalf of their lawyers. When you add together the hourly rates, it's probably costing them upwards of \$500 an hour to be able to sit down and sort through and say who gets what. I'm sure both parties in the breakdown of a relationship would prefer that when all of the dust settles, at least they get, however it's divided, to keep the assets, rather than their respective counsel doing so, regardless of the merits of the counsel, because ultimately they've got to be able to use the assets that they have accumulated to provide for themselves and to provide for their children as time goes on. What this proposal seeks to do is to enable more of that money to flow to the long-term benefits of the children and the two partners in the relationship and less of that to have to be spent on doing civil litigation.

To ensure that the obligations for children are being met following a family breakdown, Bill 133 proposes to require, and this is important, annual financial disclosure where child support orders exist. This is going to make it, for example, much easier to obtain fair child support payments, to reduce Family Court battles, and to hopefully help free up some Family Court time so that in the longer term we can use our courts more efficiently and we can get more cases through with less of them clogging up Family Court as they begin wrangling. What Bill 133 proposes to do is to make some of these rules clearer so that both parties can say, "Okay, here are what the rules are," and it's pretty easy to arrive at a decision that says, "This is how the assets should be divided. This is what happens if your ability to earn money changes and you are the one paying the child support."

The legislation would also clarify how and when pensions are divided when marriages break down.

These changes would reduce some of the strain of Family Court proceedings, and I think the most important thing is that they would save court time, which is important in terms of being able to get your case before the courts in a timely manner.



They would also reduce the cost of hiring experts. You know, if one party or the other is either concealing or suspected of concealing assets, sometimes you have to hire a forensic accountant to go through all of their financial history, which involves bringing a motion before the courts, which involves getting a judgment that says you've got to open up, and then somebody has got to pore through all of it. At least with the requirement of an annual financial disclosure, what it should do is to make the playing field level and to say to both parties, "Here is all the relevant information. Let's make an objective, a fair, an impartial, a reasonable judgment based on the fact that we've got all of the information on the table."

It may also come to pass, and I'm sure it does very often, that one partner with perhaps a substantial support obligation may run into circumstances that see his or her income substantially reduced for a time or through circumstances beyond their ability to control. It would be reasonable to ask, then, is it the intent of the support agreement that you impoverish a party by simply saying there is no flexibility here? What Bill 133 does is that it provides a measure of reasonableness to allow for changing circumstances.

The legislation was introduced in November 2008, and this is one of the planks that the Attorney General considers as a very important one to clarify the fair division of assets when marriages break down.

1520

In our community in western Mississauga, we live in a very privileged place. Our streets are clean and safe. For nine consecutive years, Mississauga has been the safest city in the safest country on earth. As two police chiefs have told me on various occasions, "You're a very lucky elected member. You represent the safest part of the safest city in the safest country on the face of the earth." All that said, inside those neat rows of relatively modern homes with well-tended yards and nice new cars in the driveway, there are a lot of families that are profoundly and deeply unhappy, and many families that break up. So when that happens, even amidst plenty, we need to settle on custody of the children, and in this case there are often considerable assets to divide. These days, many families in new homes are looking at a declining market for the homes and they may actually, in a very expensive home, have relatively little equity. When it comes to dividing the equity in the home, they may be looking at a situation in which, for all of the mortgage on the property, there may not be a lot of equity in the home.

So Bill 133 is going to provide some measure in which, as long as the information is fully disclosed, a judge, and presumably the two parties, can come to an agreement on what should be done with a valuable asset, like a home, that may be heavily mortgaged, may have been bought just a short time before, and should the judgment force the sale of a home in a bad market, should one party or the other keep the home for a period and then have it divided? These are all things that in our area of the world people have to consider. No one, I'm

sure, enters into a relationship with the avowed intention that it's not going to work out, but sometimes it doesn't work out. When it doesn't work out, what we need are very clear sets of rules and guidelines that make it possible for assets to be divided fairly and equitably.

Now, this is reform that's long overdue. There had been no significant reform to family law in Ontario in more than 20 years. I'm not going to pass judgment on that. There has just been no significant reform enacted to family law in Ontario in 20 years. So it's about time to revisit it.

One of the things about this is that it has had an awful lot of wide support. In the last few seconds remaining to me, let me just quote some of the support that this legislation has garnered. Said Tom Dart, the chair of the family law section of the Ontario Bar Association: "This is indeed a day that the family law bar has been waiting for. Minister Bentley is taking significant legislative steps towards a number of OBA goals and for which we have been advocating for many years."

There are many, many people who have added their quotes. I think all of the feedback on this, in one way or the other, has been positive. It's been, for me, a pleasure to stand up to join in the debate to bring the concerns of our community forward. I thank you for the time.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** I want to thank the member for his contribution to the debate.

This issue and the issues contained in this Family Law Reform Act are complicated, they are technical, and the understanding of them depends upon a person's understanding of what happens when these changes are implemented. Therefore, our party and the third party of Legislature would really appreciate the government allowing as many of the people who are involved in this kind of law—the lawyers, particularly the family law branch of the legal profession as well as children's aid societies and people who are involved in the care of children—to have the opportunity to have their say on the technical aspects of this bill before a committee of this Legislature.

I understand we are going to have some hearings. However, the law is administered or applied in different ways in different parts of this province, depending upon the various resources that different communities have. Therefore, we continue to ask the government side for the opportunity to have committee hearings in various different communities across Ontario. To date, we have heard the government say that this is not needed. We disagree with them entirely. This bill is very important to, hopefully, a smaller segment of our society. However, it can have unbelievable effects on the lives of the people that the bill does affect. I would ask the government to reconsider where the committee would travel with regard to their hearings on this bill. Thank you very much.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Again it's a privilege to be able to speak about not only this bill but about this topic and to



respond to the member from Mississauga–Streetsville. I listened with interest to what he had to say.

The problem, again, and it has been reiterated here many times, is that not only does this bill not go far enough but also that this bill deserves examination. It needs to be looked at. It needs to be looked at in committee. This is an incredible chance. It would be a chance missed not to have child advocates come forward, not to have lawyers who are involved in the field come forward, not to make this bill as strong as you possibly can as it moves forward, not to correct, perhaps, some of the aspects of this bill that aren't as strong as they could be. That's the chance we'll be missing here if it does not go to committee. So that's demand number one.

Certainly the other demand that arises out of this discussion, because the death of Katelynn Sampson was in part the aegis, the seed of this bill, is to look at the way in which her life and her death were handled. You've heard the member from Welland call for an inquiry or an inquest into that death. Certainly I think that comes out of her life as well. This is an incredible opportunity to look at the ways in which we could prevent—so it's the prevention that I'd like to discuss if I have some time—this from ever happening again.

So again, this bill does give us an opportunity, not perhaps as the government sees it, to examine all of the different facets of the case of Katelynn Sampson, all of the different facets of family law and perhaps even the domestic violence itself that of course is the bane of the existence of 50% of our women in this province. So that's what this bill gives us the chance to do. We need committee time. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** It's a privilege to speak on Bill 133, the Family Statute Law Amendment Act. I first of all would like to commend our Attorney General, the Honourable Christopher Bentley, for taking on what is of course a very controversial, difficult and challenging portfolio specifically with reference to this particular bill. I would also just like to commend him for coming to my riding very recently to hold hearings and a public outreach gathering of stakeholders with regard to crime: prevention of crime and the causes of crime.

So I would first of all like to say that from my perspective the Attorney General, it seems, is engaging in what I call applied humanity or possibly mobilized humanity. All of us in our various constituency offices unfortunately, and through the press, come across cases where, for example, restraining orders have been breached; where individuals are suffering because child support obligations are not met. Of course this is likely, unfortunately, to become even more acute over time as the economic downturn hits home in our various ridings with the different fallout that it might have. So for example, one of the interesting and I think very appropriate measures that Minister Bentley is going to move forward with is the idea of pension reform and child support. My colleague from Mississauga–Streetsville

spoke to that aspect with regard to, for example, it being fairer for families and making it easier to obtain fair child support payments, and hopefully helping families to also navigate what is, after all, a fairly complex legal labyrinth that's out there, meaning the court system. All in all, I think this is a very impressive and important step with regard to the Family Statute Law Amendment Act.

1530

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Like many issues dealing with family law reform, we have to keep in mind that we're dealing with children, we're dealing with families and we're dealing with women who are very, very vulnerable. We're dealing with very difficult situations, and certainly, if you talk to police officers, they'll say that one of the most difficult things they do is deal with domestic disputes and deal with custody situations with children.

I know that the Attorney General, in his usual prudent, very astute manner, will proceed to make the necessary adjustments to the Family Statute Law Amendment Act. Just to remind us all of how this is really, tragically, a universal problem, I don't know if you noticed that last week on the international news there was a tragic situation in Buffalo, New York, where a very prominent woman broadcaster was murdered by the husband, or allegedly murdered by the husband, in incredibly horrific circumstances, beyond—I won't even mention in this Legislature how she was murdered. But there had been a number of interventions by the police, a lot of warnings, and yet this unfortunate, innocent mother of two, who was very prominent in Buffalo and upper New York state, lost her life. So it's a plague that not only engulfs situations here in Ontario but, sadly to say, goes beyond the borders of this country.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi):** The member from Mississauga–Streetsville.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I'd like to thank the members for Carleton–Mississippi Mills, Parkdale–High Park, Etobicoke North and my colleague from Eglinton–Lawrence for their comments and their addition to this particular debate.

I think one of the best summations of what Bill 133 is trying to do was given to me in a handwritten note by my legislative assistant, Jessica MacInnis. Let me just quote it because it comes across very nicely. She says, "Children do best when they are not only safe but comfortable in a place that they can call home. No one should be afraid to be in their home." That's one of the things that this particular piece of legislation sets out to do.

Some of the members had called for committee time. I quite agree. I'm sure that following second reading debate, which is the stage at which this bill is, it will be referred to a standing committee. As the government has discovered over the five and a half years that we've had the privilege and responsibility of governing Ontario, bills only get better, particularly when their measures touch everybody, when we send them out and we get



good, thorough, vigorous participation from people from all over Ontario with a stake in their success. Whether that be the Greenbelt Act, whether that be our measures relating to health care or whether that be our measures relating to energy, the committee process has made good bills better, and it will take this bill—which is a good bill and which is a bill that's going to make a system more fair, more transparent and more easy to administer—it will take Bill 133 and make it a better bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi):** Further debate?

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I'm delighted to have the opportunity to rise in the House today, expecting full well that my colleagues on the other side were going to speak a little bit longer.

I am happy to have the opportunity to speak to this piece of legislation. We have a number of supportive comments being made today in this House by a variety of speakers. I want to add to that list as we look at what the Advocates' Society had to say about this piece of legislation: "We welcome this much needed and long-awaited reform. It will simplify the law and enhance fairness for the many Ontarians whose only contact with the justice system is in the area of family law."

Again, the YWCA here in Toronto had a great deal to say about the legislation: "The YWCA Toronto provides emergency shelter to 547 women and their children each year, many of whom are fleeing violence. This package of reforms will ensure that more of these women are able to keep themselves and their children safe as they move forward to lives free from violence." That's from Heather McGregor, the YWCA Toronto CEO.

Ghislaine Sirois, the executive director of the AOcVF, had this to say: "Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes appreciated being consulted about the proposed reform. If, as a result of this reform, women are better able to explain their situations and thus be better heard by the courts, their safety will have been improved."

From Barbara MacQuarrie, the community director at the Centre for Research and Education on Violence against Women and Children: "The Ministry of the Attorney General has recognized the particular vulnerability of women and children and provided Family Court judges with a valuable array of tools to help protect their safety. Advocates for women and children, certain that the new legislation will help to save lives, welcome the steps this government has taken to bring about these reforms to family law in Ontario."

The senior vice-president of member services for the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan, Rosemarie McClean, had this to say: "Giving couples the power to settle pension assets at the time that their marriage breaks down is a big win for our members. The proposed approach is fair and simple for all parties involved, including pension plan administrators, whose efforts can remain focused on other value added services to members."

The Law Society treasurer had this to say: "The Law Society of Upper Canada shares the government's con-

cern with access to justice and public protection for Ontarians. These reforms will provide benefit to both women and children, particularly through times of increased vulnerability resulting from family distress."

Finally, the executive director of the Islamic Social Services Association, Shahina Siddiqui, said that the government focus on helping families to have the right to prosecute breaches of restraining orders will help keep women and children safe. "We welcome this announcement and support the government's commitment to ensuring the rights and safety of women and children in Ontario."

I believe it's our duty as legislators to assist in keeping women and children safe across this province. We have so many wonderful people working in our communities, and I want to just say a big hello and thank you to the people at the transition house in North Bay and my native transition house in the First Nations community of Nipissing, who are doing such a great job protecting our women and children and providing them with hope and a new beginning in their lives when they've found themselves in situations of a great deal of distress and turmoil. Finding a way to change their lives is incredibly difficult, and at that point in time they need a great deal of support and assistance. We certainly have a number of people in our community who are able to do that and who are doing it so lovingly and respectfully. I want to, in particular, say hello to Janine Lafreniere and her staff at the transition house, who are doing some great work in North Bay.

The main objectives of the proposed family law reform package are to enhance the effectiveness and responsiveness of the family justice system as outlined by my colleague the Attorney General earlier. He talked about our ability to better protect women and their children from domestic violence, to help ensure the best interests of the children in custody decisions, and supporting fairness for families when marriages break down.

Family law legislation has had no significant reform in the last two decades, and it's time to reform our family laws to ensure that they support Ontario's families through times of breakdown and distress.

**1540**

We are determined, as a government, to see that disputes are resolved fairly by a system of justice that is fast and more affordable. The proposals that have been brought forward in the package today have broad consensus from police, violence against women stakeholders and the family law bar. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this legislation today, and I look forward to hearing from my colleagues as we move forward.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'm pleased to make a couple of comments on Bill 133, An Act to amend various Acts in relation to certain family law matters and to repeal the Domestic Violence Protection Act, 2000. I can really only say, from what I have heard of the debate to this



point—I guess there is a conflict on whether the government wants to have this bill travelled across our province. Apparently, someone said it has been a while since it has been amended, so in my opinion it would be better if there was some travelling. In some cases, you don't always get a lot of input, but if you set those dates up and there is interest in those communities, I believe it is the proper thing to do, and then people won't come back later on and say, "You didn't have a chance to travel."

If there are committee hearings at Queen's Park, that's one thing, but when it is a bill that affects families across the province of Ontario, it's probably best that we, as parliamentarians—there are not an awful lot of things happening; we don't have a lot of bills to debate and a lot of bills to travel. I think this is one that would satisfy the needs of the people of the province if we can get out there and hear what their concerns are. If there are, as the member from Mississauga mentioned earlier, then there is some very valuable—usually bills come through committee hearings improved, with amendments made to them, and I think the same would occur here. So I would encourage the government to reconsider travelling across the province. Take a few days and make it appropriate, and if that's the case, we might have a better bill than ever.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** It was a delight to witness the Minister of Tourism and government House leader rise to the occasion, and to witness the deference to her by her colleagues. You notice that not one of them wanted to take her spot. They were eager to hear from their House leader and Minister of Tourism, and remained seated, notwithstanding the *cri du jour* of Parliament: Who is going to speak next? They wanted to hear from their House leader, and they have.

I was delighted to hear from her. Her command of the issue is profound, and I look forward to the prospect of her being one of the committee members when we have committee hearings on this bill. She obviously has an interest in the matter; she obviously has background that would prove invaluable to the committee process.

If she could do something about the poor quality of the Northland Express, I would be truly indebted to her. If we're going to promote tourism in this province, surely the government's own rail line can be clean, staffed by people who are less than surly and run on time most of the time, if not all the time. Thank you kindly, and thank you, Ms. Smith.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Mike Colle:** The comments by my colleague the member from Nipissing outlined the various stakeholders who have been contacted in terms of this legislation and how it affects them. It will be very much appreciated, as they keep adding to their input in the process as this bill goes through the House and as it goes through committee, because there are a lot of complexities here. This

deals, again, with issues that are very real to people in very difficult—you know, restraining orders. We've all seen some very tragic situations when restraining orders were not upheld properly. Also, custody hearings can tear families apart. Generally speaking, the real victims of these custody hearings are the children, who really have no one to turn to when mom and dad are in dispute.

Also, it deals with pension reform and child support. There has been more emphasis placed on this in recent years because, obviously, when you're going after the assets of one of the partners in a dispute, a pension can amount to a great deal of money, especially when all there is left is perhaps—the home is usually divided, then the pension assets, and they can be quite contentious in dealing with the amount of pension available.

This debate will hopefully help us all better understand the complexities and, again, the real human issues that we deal with when we look at family law reform. We hope that we'll get better ideas of how to deal with these perplexing problems that face all of us.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi):** Questions and comments?

A reply from the House leader?

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I appreciate the comments from my colleague the member from Eglinton–Lawrence and, of course, from my colleague the member from Welland, also the House leader for the third party, who I have the opportunity to spend a great deal of time with these days as we try and get through these tumultuous times in the House.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** It's just working so well, isn't it? I mean, you could just see that—all the respect that he showed to me in his comments today was gratefully received.

I was just pleased to have the opportunity. These are very important issues. These are very important issues to women across the province and to all people across the province. I mean, the security and safety of children is a priority for, I think, everyone in this province, and should be.

I think the security of women and children will be improved by this new legislation through the strengthened restraining order regime with expanded eligibility for those who have lived together in a relationship for fewer than three years. Under the new legislation, restraining order breaches would be prosecuted under the Criminal Code, and this would increase protection for victims by allowing for tougher enforcement by police and stricter bail conditions.

I've had the opportunity to meet with a variety of stakeholders in my riding, including law enforcement agencies, who work so very closely with those victims of violence, and those who work in the transition house system. I know from all of them that they are looking forward to seeing increased protection for our victims and tougher enforcement so that we can ensure the safety of women and children who are victims of violence in our communities.



I do also want to acknowledge the member for Simcoe North, who also spoke to my comments. I appreciated his comments as well, and I look forward to hearing the continuing debate in the House today.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Yasir Naqvi):** Further debate?

**Ms. Laurel C. Broten:** I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to rise today and speak to Bill 133, being brought forward as the Family Statute Law Amendment Act.

The issues being debated in the House today are ones that affect families, women and children in communities around the province. In the first session that I had the opportunity to sit in this House, I had the privilege to travel around the province and talk about the reforms that we should bring forward or could bring forward to better protect women and children in cases of domestic abuse and violence. The amendments being brought forward and proposed through Bill 133, in the context of the revisions to the way we approach restraining orders, are amendments that arose directly in the context of those consultations.

The security of women and children would be improved under the new legislation through a strengthened restraining order regime with expanded eligibility for those who live together in a relationship for fewer than three years. The mechanisms for women who cohabited with a partner or a spouse to obtain a restraining order—as a young lawyer, not even yet called to the bar, working in a legal clinic and as a summer student in a family law office, it was unfortunate how many restraining orders I sought on behalf of women in London, Ontario, at the time.

1550

The issues that are being resolved and amended in the context of this legislation and the prosecution of breaches are something that, as a lawyer—you would work with your clients to obtain that protection for them and their children in some very difficult and trying circumstances. The enforcement of a breach is something that family law lawyers and those working to better protect women and children have been talking about for some time. That's why I am very pleased that, in the context of the amendments being brought forward, some of the experts around the province who may have been mentioned in this House—but I will do so again because their work, day in and day out, across the province is really the shoulder that we are standing on here today as we debate this legislation.

Pamela Cross, a legal consultant and advocate against violence against women advocate who is well-known in the community, says, "Those of us who work with abused women and their children are thrilled with this package of family law reforms. This legislation would help hundreds of women and children by making justice faster, more accessible and more affordable. Making restraining orders more available to more women who live in an environment of violence is an important step forward in both preventing and responding to violence

against women." For me, a statement from someone I've known for many years, such as Pamela Cross, giving such significant support to Bill 133, is really to be commended. I congratulate the Attorney General on bringing this forward.

Nicole Tellier, who is now the director of the Advocates' Society, someone with whom again I had the privilege to practise in law many years ago, said: "We welcome this much-needed and long-awaited reform. It will simplify the law and enhance fairness for the many Ontarians whose only contact with the justice system is in the area of family law." I think Nicole makes that statement and brings it forward as someone who has practised in the area for many, many years. For so many families it is true that their only interaction with the system, and a system that hasn't always worked perfectly, is in the context of very, very trying personal circumstances. If we, as legislators, can do one or a few small things to make the system work better for those families as they go through the dissolution of marriages and of relationships, seek to leave violent circumstances, in the case of women and children seeking to flee domestic violence, these are critical steps forward, and ones that will make a big difference in the lives of those who turn to that system. Many of us are lucky and we don't need to seek relief from the justice system to protect our children or to make sure that we can walk forward in our lives, but many women turn to that system. The system needs to work, because when it doesn't, tragic circumstances result. Being able to enforce breaches of hard-fought-for and received restraining orders is of absolute critical importance. I believe that it will better protect the lives of many women and children.

My sentiments are shared by individuals such as Heather McGregor, who's the CEO of the YWCA of Toronto. She says, "YWCA Toronto provides emergency shelter to 547 women and their children each year, many of whom are fleeing violence. This package of reforms will ensure that more of these women are able to keep themselves and their children safe as they move forward to lives free from violence."

Barbara MacQuarrie, who is the community director for the Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children in London, also supports the legislation, saying, "Advocates for women and children, certain that the new legislation will help save lives, welcome the steps this government has taken to bring about these reforms to family law in Ontario."

I want to acknowledge the groups in my own community, my home community of Etobicoke-Lakeshore, who work hard every single day to better protect the lives of women and children. They are the wonderful staff and volunteers at Women's Habitat who do that work; at the Gatehouse, who work to better protect children and help bring forward evidence with respect to the abuses that children may have suffered; and MicroSkills, who help women find their footing and develop the skills that they need for economic independence to continue along their journey of independence.



It's a long time coming that these reforms take place, and I think that we'll never fulfill all of the work that is ahead of us with respect to ending domestic violence, but we need to take steps to prevent the continuation of violence in families to break the intergenerational cycle, as a government. We started that journey at the very beginning of our mandate, soon after our privilege to serve as government in 2003, and I'm pleased to stand in the House today to see more steps being taken.

The very first volunteer role that I ever undertook as a very young teenager was to work in the yard of a domestic violence shelter, and to have an appreciation, a very slight appreciation, of the very difficult lives that were being lived behind those windows and doors.

I think today we in this House are standing up and saying that we believe we can do better, that we will do better, to better protect women and children, that we will improve evidence in custody hearings to make sure that the custody of children is determined in the best interests of the children in those decisions, and that the judges have access to the information that they need about child protection or family law cases to make the best determination and to truly make the decision that is in the best interests of the child.

We will ensure that our restraining orders can be enforced and that fairness for families will be better ensured when marriages, unfortunately, do break down.

With that, I am very pleased to have the chance to stand in support of Bill 133, to congratulate the Attorney General on bringing forward this package of amendments and to look forward to the conclusion of this debate when, in this House, we will support Bill 133 and make sure that women and children in Ontario are better protected tomorrow.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm pleased to add some comments to Bill 133, the Family Statute Law Amendment Act, and to the speech from the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore. As was pointed out earlier in comments by the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills, this bill is dealing with technical and complicated issues, particularly as it relates to the calculation and entitlement for pensions, with amendments to the Family Law Act. Certainly, that's why, on this side, we've been asking for committee hearings of four to five days travelling around the province. I understand the government's not interested in doing that, and we're disappointed by that, because I think that we especially need some expert advice on the technical aspects of this bill.

I believe that there are also some shortcomings to the bill which we'd like to see addressed. I know that the member from Durham, who is going to have an opportunity to speak to this bill on Wednesday, has a private member's bill called the Lori Dupont bill.

From what I understand with this current bill, Bill 133—unfortunately, its section 46, as restated, does not appear to deal with the need for emergency intervention orders, which the Lori Dupont Act would have done and

which are clearly needed. The new section 46 essentially just restates the old section 46, which allows for a restraining order upon application. The Lori Dupont Act would allow for emergency applications to be made without notice where there is an immediate threat of harm. Obviously, we think that would be an improvement. We look forward to hearing from the member from Durham, who will speak on Wednesday, and we hope that the government will agree to our critic's request for travel of this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney):** The member for Parkdale–High Park.

1600

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's a pleasure, again, to say something about this issue and this bill, and I look forward to adding some comments in more length in a few minutes.

Suffice to say, the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore pointed to some of those groups in her riding that are doing what they can to combat violence against women. The group in my riding that springs to mind immediately is Redwood shelter. Unfortunately, the Redwood shelter, which is known throughout Canada and throughout Ontario, always has a lack of funds, always has a lack of bed beds, and always feels as if they're not doing what they should be doing were they adequately funded and had they adequate beds for the women in our community and across Toronto. I also think of victim services, another amazing organization, government-funded, that, again, is chronically underfunded and wishes they could do more when they arrive at the scene of a crime, usually with a police person in tow, for the victims. They simply don't have the money to have the staff they need, and so they're largely staffed—both of these organizations—by volunteers. That is how seriously this government takes a response to domestic violence. If we really took it seriously, we would fund it adequately. That's something that I hope for, for those groups in my riding, for the groups across Ontario who spend a good portion of their time writing funding proposals rather than doing what we hope they would do, which is look after women and children. So I look forward to saying a bit more about that and, of course, more about Katelynn in a few minutes.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney):** The member for Etobicoke North.

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** Once again, of course, it's a duty and privilege to rise to support Bill 133, the Family Statute Law Amendment Act. I have a couple of points to mention.

First of all, I'd like to use this opportunity, Speaker, with your permission, to actually commend our Attorney General, the Honourable Christopher Bentley, for coming to my riding fairly recently to engage in a stakeholder meeting. I think everyone who attended that meeting really found it an exercise in applied compassion, and I think this particular bill speaks very strongly to exactly those formats as well.

I was actually privileged just this weekend, courtesy of Dr. Kirsty Duncan, our newly elected federal Liberal



member of Parliament for Etobicoke North, to speak on issues regarding domestic violence, the abuse of women, of elders, and I think this was also a very important aspect that was brought to light. For example, I learned at that particular function how excellent organizations within my own riding, like the Ernestine's Women's Shelter and Women's Habitat, are providing services with regard to people who have to leave abusive situations. I think this particular bill, complex as it is, is strengthening, for example, things like restraining orders; is helpfully helping to streamline, if such a thing be possible, the custody hearings; and of course is talking to the very real issue of financial support and division of assets, which of course will become even more acute as the economic downturn unfortunately takes further hold on our society and on our constituents. So it's a very important bill, a lot of moving parts, but something that we need to speedily pass in this Legislature so that we can actually have the benefits on the ground.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Mike Colle:** It's a privilege to comment on the member from Etobicoke-Lakeshore's dissertation on this important Bill 133. I was just driving through her riding on Saturday, on wonderful Lakeshore Boulevard, where you drive through what is sometimes the forgotten part of Toronto, the old towns of Mimico, New Toronto, where there are a lot of very hard-working people.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I know some members are laughing at the people of Etobicoke, but there are people in Etobicoke who have lived there for two or three generations. They live by the wholesale fruit market there, where people come from all over Ontario to sell their goods. These men and women wake up at four in the morning in Etobicoke and they work at the wholesale market every day. They work for many years at Goodyear Tires. They work at all the shops along Lakeshore. They're not people who ask for much, but they ask for government support when times are tough. In this case here, the Attorney General is trying to ensure that there are updated, fair rules when it comes to family disputes.

I'm sure the member's citizens and constituents in Etobicoke-Lakeshore appreciate her seriousness about this issue, because there are situations that arise, and they come to all of our offices on a too-regular basis, whether it's dealing with the Family Responsibility Office—but these are people who are going through some very traumatic times. So whatever we can do in this House to ease that burden and to put in some new legislation that makes it fairer and takes into account the trials and tribulations of these families I think would be much appreciated by the people of Etobicoke-Lakeshore and right across this province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney):** The member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore has two minutes to reply.

**Ms. Laurel C. Broten:** I'd like to thank the members from Parkdale-High Park, Parry Sound-Muskoka, Etobicoke North and Eglinton-Lawrence for the comments they've made in joining in the debate on Bill 133.

I want to pick up on the comments made by my friend and colleague from Eglinton-Lawrence, who always tries in this chamber to bring us back to the reality of people's lives. Rather than talk about, "These are technical and complicated issues," the member from Eglinton-Lawrence talks about real people and how the amendments being brought forward in Bill 133 will improve the lives of real people, real women and children, by making sure, in this one instance—and I want to focus on the restraining order—that when a mother, after many, many years of abuse or incidences of abuse, finally picks up the phone or walks out the door and says, "I am going to do something about this; I'm going to see a lawyer; I'm going to go to the clinic; I'm going to get a restraining order"—when she takes that step and goes to court and gets that restraining order, as difficult and as trying as that is, that restraining order will be enforced. There is nothing worse as an advocate than to work with a client, to seek to protect them, to ensure that that restraining order is available to them, and be concerned that it might not have the teeth it needs to be obeyed.

That is the crux of the significant revisions being brought forward in this bill, so that a restraining order will act as an effective deterrent and women who step up and say, "I need the help of this court system to protect myself and my children," will know that that system is there to protect them when they turn to it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney):** Further debate?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's a privilege to stand—and I certainly stand in honour of Katelynn Sampson, who was part of the inspiration of this piece of legislation—in actual homage to not only herself but to her mother and to all of those people who were intimately involved in the life of that family in Parkdale-High Park. There were many, and they did what they could and many of them did their best.

It's interesting that when we look at the ethical imperative of a response to something like domestic violence or child abuse, there are two things we can do, you know. We can send a cheque in the mail to a shelter, we can pass a piece of legislation that tinkers around the edges and makes us feel better but that is virtually unenforceable, or we can actually, finally—and I think women and children across this province wish that that time was this time, now—look at what causes domestic violence, what causes child abuse, look at some sort of prevention for both and certainly, when they occur, look at systematic structural changes to a system that clearly doesn't work.

What we have here instead is a nice little bill. As I said, it's a centimetre when we need a kilometre. If it was taken seriously as a moment in which to confront these two horrors—domestic violence and child abuse—it should be given its due. It should be taken to committee and it should have a chance to be aired before the victims, before women who've been abused, before children who've been abused, before the people who work with them, before the lawyers who appear in Family Court. It



should be tested before it's put on the road. That's really all that the opposition is asking for here. It's not a lot to ask, considering the profundity of these two evils.

1610

When I think of Katelynn appearing before that judge that day—in fact, not appearing; adults appearing on her behalf—I think of the miscarriage of justice that clearly happened that day. The member from Welland has outlined that in painstaking detail. When I think of that day, in a sense it was already too late for her. This was a little girl who had already had problems in school. This was a little girl being raised by a woman who was a self-confessed drug addict, whose addiction was out of control and who could find no treatment. This was a situation already that had been going on for seven years. The question is, why? Why, in seven years of this child's life? What structures are in place that allow this to happen? It's not only at the end of her life and the horror of what could have happened and should have happened and didn't happen at that particular court on that particular day, but it's all the seven years before. What should we have been doing as legislators? What should we have been doing as members of her community to help that little girl who was obviously in distress for many, many years—and her mother, by the way, because one of the myths around children and child abuse and even child poverty is that somehow you can separate children away from their families and their communities, somehow you can treat child poverty without treating the poverty of the mother. This is one of the great myths. Somehow you can look after a woman who has been beaten and not look after her children. You cannot separate that family unit. They operate as a family. They're traumatized as a family. They are poor as a family. So was Katelynn's family.

Katelynn's family was a family in distress. Bernice was in distress; Katelynn was in distress. Some really wonderful people in Parkdale worked very hard with them. Parkdale Activity-Recreation Centre is a phenomenal drop-in, one of the best I've ever seen anywhere. They knew Bernice; I knew Bernice because occasionally, when I have time, I serve breakfast at a breakfast program that's operated out of a church. As a minister, I knew Bernice when she used to come to our drop-in at the church and our dinner program. So I knew her, and in fact I never even knew she had a child. She didn't appear with her little girl. I was shocked to discover that she had a child, because the drop-in is really mostly a place for adults.

So when we collectively mourned the loss of Katelynn Sampson, everyone had that question. You can't help it. You're human, and hopefully ethical. The question is, what could we have done differently in Parkdale, in my riding, to prevent what happened?

I have a few answers. We came up with them. They're pretty straightforward ones. First and foremost is that we could have had child care. We could have had child care for Bernice Sampson, the kind of child care that would be, if not free, virtually free, that she could have dropped

that little girl off when she needed to. So that would have been, in a sense, a first line of defence. But even before she was child-care age, there was a wonderful program that I read about—not only in Hawaii but I think it began there—where a woman at risk with a pregnancy at risk, like Bernice, is assigned a social worker who works with that woman from the point of conception right through the birth, right on until the child is in school, and continues to monitor that family. That takes money. That takes funding. That could have saved a life. Daycare takes money. It takes funding. But clearly our neighbours in Quebec have child care, at only \$7 a day, for those who need it. Bernice would have used it if she had it.

Bernice would also have used, if she had access to it, as would many people in my community who have addiction and mental health issues—and often the two go together. She would have certainly and gladly tried rehabilitation, would have gladly gone to a detox centre, would have gladly gone from there to a rehabilitation program specifically designed for those with addiction issues. She would have needed to be there for at least three months for it to have any impact at all. That does not, for all intents and purposes, exist for those who have addiction issues in my riding. The wait-list for something like that—and usually not that long—is at least six months. Anyone who has dealt with drug addicts knows that when you need it, you need it then; you need it now. You can't wait six months. Six months is too late. In six months, you're dead or your child is dead. That was the case here with Bernice Sampson.

So, affordable child care would have helped.

Certainly, a social worker who had the time and the funding to intervene on a consistent basis—not with a caseload of hundreds of people, where maybe you get around to it now and then if there's some trauma reported to you—somebody who had the time to actually monitor that family, would have helped.

Treatment programs for those with addiction issues would have helped.

All of those structural realities would have helped this family, would have potentially saved this little life. Those are structural responses that we in this chamber have the power to enact. We have the power to do it, and quite frankly, no matter what you hear from across the floor, we have the money to do it too. We are one of the wealthiest jurisdictions in the world. The question is, who do we value? Where do we value? Do we value the lives enough to really put the funding behind the programs?

The city of Toronto has a wonderful drug strategy, one that we're trying to implement in Parkdale–High Park. It's a four-pronged approach. We have caregivers who sit around a table, we've had educational events, we've done a number of practical projects related to implementing the drug policy that the city of Toronto has brought in. Does the province of Ontario have one? No, we don't have one. In fact, the reason we're working with the city of Toronto drug policy and drug strategy, its four-pronged approach, is that we're hoping we can show that



it works in a neighbourhood and we're hoping that it can be uploaded to the province of Ontario so that the province and the Ministry of Health sees that this works, because ultimately, this saves money.

What else would have helped this family? Certainly, housing would have helped this family, because Bernice and her daughter moved frequently. This is the life of a mother who is addicted, who lives partly on the streets, partly in housing. Her daughter moved with her to some pretty unsavoury places, I have to say, and it was a pretty unsavoury place in which she died. Nobody knew, nobody saw, nobody was there to monitor. So a housing program—and this, of course, is what women who are fleeing domestic violence need too. They need transitional housing, not a shelter. There are very few shelters for women anyway. But what these women want is someplace permanent, someplace that they can go where their children can be raised with some kind of stability, where they're not living from place to place to place, packing their bags and moving all of the time. That would have helped. That's structural. That takes money. Other jurisdictions do this. Other jurisdictions have these responses.

When I was at an eastern legislators' conference not too long ago, I was in a room where American legislators, state reps, were saying—finally, one might say—“Well, you know, this zero tolerance doesn't work. Locking everyone up for drug abuse issues—dealing, using—doesn't work.” And not only does it not work, Republicans and Democrats agreed, but it's expensive. It's way more expensive to lock up Bernice Sampson—which, by the way, is where she is right now, I think; the last I heard she was locked up in a facility down the hall from those who had abused her daughter. How fair is that?

1620

They discovered in the eastern states that it costs less to treat the addiction issue as a health problem than it does to lock up people with addiction issues. It costs \$40,000 to \$50,000 a year, they figured, to keep somebody in prison, and it doesn't help because they go out and they come back in again: the revolving door that so many of our police force and social workers recognize so quickly. So that would help. That's rational.

It also costs less to put somebody in permanent housing than it does to run a patchwork system of shelters and to keep people homeless, like Bernice. That's very clear. It's been shown both in New York state and in BC in Vancouver. They've done studies that have shown it costs between \$40,000 and \$55,000 a year to keep somebody homeless. That sounds counterintuitive, but it's not, because they stay in shelters. They not only stay in shelters; they are arrested by police. That's expensive. They go in and out of prisons. That's expensive. They go into emergency wards. That's expensive. All of that adds up to being more expensive than simply providing them some relatively inexpensive housing.

I remember when Mr. Gerretsen was housing minister, and being one of those who was taking him to task as a

housing critic, I confronted him with that fact. I said, “You know better than anybody that it costs more to keep somebody homeless. It can cost up to \$150 a night in real dollars to put somebody in a shelter,” and he admitted it. He said into Hansard: “Yes, we get it. We get that it's probably cheaper to put somebody up in a motel than it is to keep our current state of affairs.” What sort of insanity is that? Well, I'll tell you: It's the insanity that ends in a child's death. That's the insanity, the structural insanity, that keeps the poor poor, the homeless addicted, and ends with the most vulnerable among us dying. That's the structural insanity.

I put forward a motion called Holly's law. This, again, is in honour of another victim, a little girl who was also brutally murdered. Her mother, an incredible activist in our riding, is working with others to try to implement primary prevention programs in all of the elementary schools. These are a whole generation more sophisticated than your old “Don't talk to strangers” stuff that some of our children received. Now they are training teachers to sit with children to allow children to express themselves, so that if there's something untoward happening at home they have an audience and somebody who is trained to listen and to get them to talk. It's a very inexpensive program and it has been proven a very effective one.

There are many versions of this program out there. For example, Parkdale Public School uses it now, and it has been costed out. It would cost only \$1 million to implement that program in all elementary schools across the province—because that's the other thing that could have happened. There could have been more involvement when the child goes to school, and that means social work involvement; that means guidance counsellor involvement; that means school psychologist involvement; that means somebody going with a child who's having problems to check out the home scene and see what it looks like. But again, there's not enough funding.

This is not only ethically wrong; it's also economically wrong. It's short-sighted, absolutely short-sighted, because if we have an inquiry, and we should, into Katelynn Sampson's death, you know that the fallout from that death is far more expensive, ultimately, than it would be to take the baby steps needed to prevent it at every turning point. It's like in this little girl's death there was a series of dominoes, and these dominoes of negligent adults, negligent structures and negligent laws have been falling and have crushed her one after the other after the other. So that's what we should be doing.

Quite frankly this bill, small though it might be, would allow us at least a chance to talk this through in this Legislature. That's what committee work can do so effectively. We could hear from deputants who would tell you this and other things about their experience in the field and hopefully, maybe, finally we could look at the root problem, the root cause of domestic violence, the root cause of child abuse, rather than always tinkering after the fact around the edges at far more cost than it would cost to start to get into prevention.

The same, of course, is true of domestic violence. Women get beaten up and women stay in homes where



they get beaten up because they can't afford to leave. Women still make 71 cents for every dollar that men make. The minimum wage earners are mainly women, and the minimum wage is below the poverty line. If women were paid enough to live independent lives, they would much more often take that tack if they could.

This is what we finally need to begin to address. When will it be addressed? That's the cry from the community that looks after the Bernice Sampsons, the Katelynnns, the Holly Joneses and their families. This is the cry that comes to this chamber. It's never heard, and it's never, ever acted on. We always are happy with playing around the edges of the issue, making a centimetre move when we need to structurally revamp the way we look at women's and children's issues.

I don't know about you, but—every year the same thing happens. Quite frankly, I feel for our police force. It's not every day that you have a commanding officer of a division weeping in your office, like I have had, over the case of Katelynn, over other cases that they've seen, all in my riding, unfortunately. They need the tools. The social workers need the tools. The daycare workers need the tools. The teachers and the principals need the tools. The housing activists need the tools. They know what they need to do. They have the answers. The research is in. It's been done. We know it would be cheaper in the long run to do what they ask us to do than to bring forth pieces of legislation that tackle only the periphery of the problem, like this one does. We know, but we don't act.

I don't know what it would take; I really don't. But I imagine, I suspect, that if these were wealthy white men and a scourge were upon them where one in every two of them were abused or harassed and where one in every six of them were poor and hungry or where every so often one of them died in horrific situations—I expect that we would act. I expect, if those wealthy white men were lawyers, we might act. But they're not; they're women and they're children.

On behalf of another generation of victims to come, the cry is here and now, and the cry is, "No more small steps." Please, finally, take a big one. Please, finally address the roots of the problems. Please, finally make the structural changes.

This bill is before us. Let's start here. We could start with committee work, we could hear from all of the deputants, and we could move forward in a major way rather than in a minor way. That really, finally, is the only fitting tribute to that little girl, Katelynn Sampson.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Bob Delaney):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Laurel C. Broten:** I want to pick up on something that the member for Parkdale-High Park was talking about in the need to address the root of problems. I want to spend just a moment, if I can, talking about an organization in my community called the Gatehouse, which really does seek to address the root of the problem when it comes to better protecting children in their area of expertise and adult survivors of child abuse.

The Gatehouse has worked for many years to better help protect children in the instances where they are dis-

closing violent circumstances, and has been looked upon as a leader across North America and sought out for the techniques and the technologies that they use in really making sure that the child has a safe place to disclose abuse, and that adult survivors of child abuse have a safe place to turn to when they are on what will no doubt be a very trying life journey following that abuse.

1630

I'm very pleased to be part of a government and a member of a Legislature that has taken a number of steps over the last number of years to seek to attempt and start to address the roots of these various issues. The domestic violence action plan that was brought forward by the Premier in the last mandate really sought for the first instance to break the cycle of violence by helping children better understand their own self-worth, and by making sure that boys who observed violence in abusive relationships did not perpetuate that abuse, and that girls who witnessed it did not allow themselves to be victimized.

Similarly, in the last session, this House supported my private member's bill with respect to reporting child pornography, which is also one of the root causes of that abuse. I think we can move forward from those steps and know that we are taking steps forward to addressing the roots of this issue.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney):** Further questions and comments?

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** How appropriate today that we're discussing Bill 133 when, of course, the children's advocate issued his report and we learned that 90 children died in the last year, all of them under some form of government care. I have to look at that report and read about some of his findings and his concerns, and wonder if we're going far enough with Bill 133.

Many members have spoken about how these statutes haven't been amended in 20 years. I look at some of the work our member from Durham, John O'Toole, has been attempting to do with his private member's bill, and of course the member from Parkdale-High Park with Holly's law. There are a number of experts and people we need to hear from directly to know whether Bill 133 is going to sufficiently protect the next Katelynn Sampson.

I would hope those public hearings are complete and fulsome, and do include the family lawyers, the shelters and, most importantly, the victims who have been through the system and need to share their thoughts on how we can improve it and how we can make it better, so that the next children's advocate's report doesn't have 90 children dying. We aim, through steps like Bill 133, to decrease that number in the years to come.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Cheri DiNovo, the member for Parkdale-High Park, has hit the nail right on the head. We can't look at these matters in that narrow, myopic way; we have to examine all the causes and effects and be prepared to take bold steps. She talks about moving a



centimetre when we should be taking metre-long strides. We've got the opportunity.

You know darned well, as I do, that this stuff doesn't get revisited every year or two years; it happens once a decade, once every 20 years. It's going to be a long time before any Parliament in this province re-addresses the very process that's required of people seeking custody of a child. Let's do it right.

The government talks about how more information to the court is better than less information. Let's make sure the court gets all the possible information, and let's talk about ensuring that people in communities across this province have access to resources: the fundamental need for family law clinics, so that children can be represented and their interests can be protected, and so that women can be protected and their interests advanced; an honest, candid look at the huge backlogs in our provincial court system especially. We have private courts for people who can afford chambers—dispute resolution—but those people are most likely to effectively resolve their issues themselves. They're the ones who least need an intervention, an intermediary or a third party. Let's make our provincial court, family division, truly accessible, meaningful and relevant. Let's staff them properly. Let's make sure that people seeking redress in those courts have access to legal representation that's competent and qualified.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney):** Further questions and comments.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I certainly recognize and respect the member from Parkdale–High Park in her former role as a United Church minister, and probably spending a large proportion of her time, during her ministerial activities, dealing with situations of domestic violence.

I must say, though, I'm not an expert on what happens in Toronto, but I just want to congratulate the two school boards in my riding: the Kawartha Pine Ridge board, and the board with which my wife is a vice-principal, the Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington separate school board, where they've spent and put forward a lot of resources over the last number years into the anti-bullying strategy.

If you address bullies at a very young age, that tends to change behaviours as they mature and grow older. We do know, and we have very clear evidence that shows, that if you don't get at some of those root causes at a very early age, those bullies tend to grow up and they find themselves in a marital situation where they abuse their partner, their wife and ultimately their children. So I think that's a very important area that we need to look at.

The member from Welland is right: When you look at the history of this province in terms of family law, it's about every decade or two that a substantive reform comes forward in this area, building on Ontario's rich history in terms of family law. I did indicate that a member of my family, H. Allan Leal, was the first chair of the Law Reform Commission in the province of Ontario in the early 1960s. When you look at some of his writings back then, in 1962-63, they were certainly the

start of the first building blocks of family law in the province of Ontario. That was carried forward by his successors, Attorneys General and indeed opposition members who took great interest in developing family law in the province of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney):** Further questions and comments?

The member for Parkdale–High Park, you have two minutes to reply.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Thank you all for your input. I believe that what is going on in the province as far as domestic violence and child abuse is concerned is absolutely terrible, and it's not getting better. In fact, as the recession deepens and our social services get more strained and our courts become more crowded, it's going to get a lot worse. That's where we start from. That's why Bill 133 is not enough. That's why we need committee hearings, to make sure that we get it right and to make sure that finally we do something about the structural problems.

I liked the comments from the member from Dufferin–Caledon. We had a graphic example of that this morning: 90 children dead; 500 in five years. This is unacceptable. This is awful. We don't need a little bill to deal with that. We need dramatic action to deal with that.

The member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore talked about the Gatehouse. I'm familiar with the Gatehouse. Like Redwood, it's chronically underfunded. If she thinks it's doing such a good job—and I think Redwood is, we can all name something in our ridings that's doing the same service—let's give them multi-year stable funding so that they don't have to waste their precious time filling in funding proposals. Let's fund the services adequately. That's, in short, the message. Let's put the money where our mouths are in this chamber, finally, when it comes to talking about domestic violence and child abuse. It's not a lot of money—in the overall scheme of things, a saving—probably, but let's take dramatic action now.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney):** Further debate?

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I'm pleased to stand up and speak in support of Bill 133, family law reform.

Before I start, I want to congratulate the minister, the Attorney General, for bringing such an important step toward reforming the Family Law Act in the province of Ontario. Many people spoke before me and mentioned the importance of this reform and the importance of protecting family and especially children. There's no doubt about it; whatever we do on a daily basis, we're not going to solve the whole problem. But I believe Bill 133 is an important step towards reforming family law in Ontario, since this issue has not been touched for many years.

1640

I believe strongly that it's a very complex issue—not just about law; not just about certain issues. It's a mix of a lot of issues that get together and create the problem. But in order to start somewhere, we have to make some kind of rule or regulation and change the law in order to



give us the ability and give the court the chance and the tools to be able to exercise the law. They see it's important to protect the family in this province, starting with restraining orders.

I was listening to many members beside me speaking about what's important for us: to protect the people before or after? I believe strongly that it's our obligation and duty to create a prevention mechanism to give to the court, to give them the ability to create a protection mechanism for the people who are in danger. It's not just for people who are married; it's for the people who have been living together for more than three years, because this relationship is almost like a marriage. As people live together, they establish a network. They might have a family, they might have kids, so they might be affected by that relationship.

So I think the restraining order is a very important step. If someone is living with someone for more than three years and sees some kind of strange activities and they believe and feel their life is in danger, I believe the court will act in this regard to protect them and put a restraining order on that partner who is exercising against the law. I think that's a very important step, and whoever violates this step will be prosecuted under criminal law. It puts some kind of punishment against the people who think of violating the restraining order.

We hear a lot of stories on a daily basis, all of us from different constituencies—from the north to the west to the south to the east of Toronto—a lot of different stories, strange stories about domestic abuse. Domestic abuse happens for many different reasons, and my friend and colleague from the NDP party, the member from Parkdale–High Park, mentioned many different times that poverty plays an important role in this element that sometimes causes those strained relationships between partners. So I think it's an important element, but I don't think we are able, in this bill, to address it altogether.

This bill introduced by the Attorney General would reform the law in this province to give the tools to the courts, to the lawmakers, to make steps toward creating protections.

As a result of this domestic abuse—we have a family, we have children. So what happens to those children? Sometimes both partners are equally unable to raise a child. What would happen to those children? Do they go to the street? Who's going to protect them? If this bill passes, it gives people who are non-parents the chance to apply to gain custody, according to the rules and laws of province of Ontario, if they are fit in all the meanings of the word; which means, if they are able financially, psychologically, and they are also respecting the law and able to raise the kids, because raising children is a very important step; it's not just putting food on the table. They also need a lot of psychological treatment, nurturing, because you are bringing up people who are going to be adults and able people in the future. Childhood is an important step, according to all the psychologists, all the people who work at the education level. Whatever we feed our children in the beginning, whatever we give

them in instructions or whatever we raise them on, they're going to be in the future. So psychology and behaviour, I think, depends on the first steps of our lives.

I was reading a lot of psychology books, and many different experiments have been done on many different societies and communities, and they determined that childhood is an important step for our future. Therefore, choosing the right custody is important. This bill, if passed, will create that mechanism, the right fit to raise those children.

Sometimes when we talk about custody we're talking about the importance of the people who are able to carry on the mission of raising kids. To support them is very important, to give them the financial support they need in order to take that responsibility, on behalf of their natural parents. So we have to make the rules and make some kind of way to allow those people to get the support.

Also, part of this bill, as has been mentioned before—a very important step is sometimes the pension. How can we split the pension between the family and the kids, the husband and wife, or partners, to eliminate any problem from arising in the future? Also, the assets, if those assets exist—how we can divide those equally and give a person a chance to live with respect and dignity.

I know that in many different communities we have a lot of shelters for women to go to and get financial support from community organizations, from city or government or whatever; they exist in every different jurisdiction. I get the chance from time to time to visit those places. I see how much effort they put in, first, to protect them, to create some kind of safe haven for those people and their children and their escaping any violence, to live in those shelters. I think it's our obligation and duty to create that system and to support that system in order to create a transitional time for the family which is under abuse, psychologically and physically and mentally—to create those transitional homes for them.

My friend from Etobicoke–Lakeshore spoke about her community and was talking about the great organizations that look after women who are escaping from family abuse. I think it's our obligation also to support them and give their children the support they need, give the families the support they need and the legal support they need.

Some people are privileged; they have the ability to go to those places safely, without being killed or kidnapped or abused more in their partner relationship, but some people cannot; we understand that. Some people cannot make that decision because they're afraid; they're afraid of the future. They have no other alternative, as the member from Parkdale–High Park mentioned many different times. Some people don't have that determination, that will, that ability mentally and physically to move on and choose the alternative. I think that's why we have so many different family clinics across the province of Ontario. I especially want to mention the successful ones in London, Ontario, which are playing a pivotal role in our community to create or to give the family, which is under a lot of pressure, the counselling and the support



they need to move on to the second stage. They give them the psychological support, the mental support in order to give them that little push, a little help to move them from a dangerous situation to a better place to live.

I also want to speak about a very important element. I heard the member from Parkdale–High Park mention certain communities' views and that we forget about many different multicultural communities and that people from different backgrounds come to Canada, to Ontario. They have no idea, no understanding of the law that exists in this province, especially the females who are not able to speak the language, not able to navigate the system to go from place to place. They don't know their rights. So those people, those females, those women, are under a lot of abuse and a lot of stress. That's why I got the chance, I guess a month or a month and a half ago, to meet with the Attorney General in London, Ontario, and a very good organization from London. We came to his office and explained the circumstances, with the support, I think, from the family clinic of London, led by Barb MacQuarrie, who is a leading expert in this field—to help domestically abused women in the London region, to see what kinds of possibilities we have to create the same chance for those people who come from different backgrounds, who cannot speak the language, who do not understand the law or who don't understand their rights in the province of Ontario, to create organizations that give them the support they need, give them a way to escape from their abusive husband or partner.

1650

As we mentioned, not just females are being abused; sometimes it's males. But the majority of abusers, sadly, are from the male side. We, as males, sometimes use our strength, our physical ability, to abuse our partners for many different reasons—and also because, in general, most of the working partners are male, so we use our economic strength to put more pressure on our female partners. Therefore, I think this bill, if it passes, will create some tools and mechanisms for the courts, for the lawmakers—to give them the chance to create a support mechanism.

I want to congratulate the Attorney General for bringing forward such an important bill to help our families and our children in this province to live with respect and dignity and also at the same time be protected and treated fairly according to the laws and regulations of this province.

Thank you very much for allowing me to speak. I hope we hear from many people about my speech.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Bob Delaney):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I appreciate the opportunity to just make a few comments with respect to the remarks that were made by the member from London–Fanshawe.

I would say at the outset, I certainly agree with you that Bill 133 does make changes to very significant areas in family law: with respect to the splitting up of pensions as net family property on marriage breakdown or breakup of a relationship; with respect to protection of children;

custody and support issues; the recalculation on an annual basis of financial statements; and then, not least of all, of course, is the issue of domestic violence.

I would say that the point that we're making is not that the changes that are being made are bad. They are good. They're a step in the right direction, but they're not enough. It's very seldom that we have the opportunity to debate issues, especially relating to family law, on a comprehensive basis. So our hope would be that we would be able to make some of those other changes that you spoke of to make it a safer system for victims of domestic violence.

You mentioned that there may be women who may be new to Canada, new to Ontario, who may be facing significant language difficulties, who are coming into some of the legal clinics and having problems understanding what their rights are and finding avenues for support and assistance when they need it. That's something that perhaps could have been dealt with, in addition to the restraining orders and the other changes that are being contemplated by Bill 133.

The other issue is with respect to the actual restraining orders themselves. I have certainly been told by several family law practitioners that there is a concern with respect to the enforcement of those orders. Certainly, the changes contemplated by Bill 133 are helpful, but it has also been suggested that maybe there should be greater coordination between the courts and the police services to make sure that these are enforced uniformly, and perhaps even have a common form of restraining order that they could use.

These are some of the things that we're hoping we can deal with in committee.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Bob Delaney):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I appreciate the comments of the member from London–Fanshawe. He certainly has walked in the shoes of the newcomers who come to London and come to Ontario and have very daunting challenges.

You can imagine what it's like for young mothers, especially, and mothers trying to raise a family, when they come to this country with no language capability, trying to access services. Try to do it on the phone: All you get is this voicemail runaround and you don't know where to turn. So the phone doesn't work. You try to go online; everybody now says, "Well, go online." Well, it's like saying, "Go for a walk in the park." Going online sometimes, you can imagine, for some people with a language barrier, and the complexity of services—sometimes the services are there, and I think this is one of the roles we play as MPPs.

I visited Yorkdale Secondary School. There are a lot of newcomer women there, the majority of them from Turkey and Palestine. If I can just mention, this young woman from Palestine really impressed me. She said: "You know, this country isn't perfect, but you know what happened to me? I was in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, last month. I was in a cab asking directions of the driver and I



was talking and smiling with the driver because the driver was helpful. Well, I got arrested in Riyadh. I was jailed for three days because I was smiling in the back of the cab in Riyadh." So she said: "This is the kind of oppression that sometimes happens and that women find very, very difficult to deal with." So at least, hopefully, we don't have that here.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney):** Further questions and comments?

**Ms. Laurel C. Broten:** I'm really pleased to have a chance to join in the debate and congratulate my colleague from London-Fanshawe, who speaks regularly in this House with a great deal of passion, with a great deal of understanding of his home community and the challenges that individuals right across our province face.

The amendments that are being debated today with respect to family law reform to some may seem technical; to others, they may seem really just the tip of an iceberg. The reality is, with respect to family law there are many challenges, but these are very important places to start with respect to restraining orders and evidence in child custody cases. They are ones that the experts—as I named and commented with respect to earlier—who work in this field each and every day say will make a meaningful difference in the lives of women and children.

For those of us in this Legislature who don't practise in that world every day, don't have an appreciation of the significant challenges that women and children face, I think we need to take and heed the good advice that is being offered to us. That is what our Attorney General has done in bringing forward this package of reforms: heeding and taking the advice of those experts who have gained expertise through many years in the trenches fighting these battles on behalf of women and children. That is who I know my colleague from London-Fanshawe listens to, has listened to, advocates on behalf of. His community in London has shown incredible leadership when it comes to better protecting women and children, and they've sent a wonderful representative here on their behalf.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Pat Hoy:** I'm pleased to join in and comment on the presentation by the member from London-Fanshawe. He spoke about families, which this bill naturally addresses in a great way, and the breakdown of families, that sad situation when that might happen.

I have come to learn of a situation. I don't know the names of the people, and you'll know why in a moment, but there was a family breakdown; there were situations that were extreme. I really can't imagine this happening and explaining it to a young child, but the mother in this particular case moved away from the area, far enough away from an abusive spouse, and they had to change their names to protect their family. So not only do we have a situation where you're talking to a young and impressionable child, "We've left Daddy," trying to explain what might be very difficult circumstances as to

why—maybe you won't explain that until they are much older—but, "We're going to another city in order to protect ourselves," and further than that, "We're going to change our names. Your last name is not going to be the same anymore. We're going to change it. We're just going to change it." But it's all done for protection purposes. The stories are many and varied. Bill 133 is to help protect those people who find themselves in these very difficult circumstances.

There is much in society that can be appalling, but I don't think there's anything more appalling than the abuse of children in any form, whether it's verbal, physical or otherwise. So I'm pleased that the minister has brought this very important legislation forward at this time, and I would urge the House to support it, and we can move forward with it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney):** Member for London-Fanshawe, you have two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I want to thank all those who spoke, especially from Whitby-Oshawa, Eglinton-Lawrence, Etobicoke-Lakeshore and Chatham-Kent-Essex.

I want to echo my friend from Etobicoke-Lakeshore. Yes, it's a technical amendment and changes. It's important to open the door for our social reform to take place in order to continue the job.

The member from Whitby-Oshawa mentioned that it's not just technicalities that are the problem; some social issues also have to be addressed. There's no doubt about it, but it's very important. We have to take the technical step in the right direction in order to give the courts and lawmakers in this province the ability to protect the vulnerable people among us.

Also, some kinds of technicalities sometimes make a huge difference, especially when a family or a marriage breaks up. What happens? They fight about the assets, about the pension, about money, about custody. All this should be mentioned, should be detailed, should be updated in order, first, to lower court costs, and also to make fewer problems between the two partners. The transition would be easier if everything is clear to them and the law comes to assist them.

I also think it's very important for all of us to make sure that the relationship between two partners, whether married or not married, can be well designed and well known before the marriage, and especially after the marriage, because it causes a lot of harm, not just for them but also for the children they have, which is important for all of us from many different points of view, because they are the future of the province and the future of the nation. Therefore, it is our duty and obligation to protect them and make sure they are protected according to the law we have.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney):** Further debate?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I move adjournment of the debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney):** The Minister of Community and Social Services has moved

adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading debate adjourned.*

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** What's the next order for debate?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I move adjournment of the House.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** It's only 5 o'clock.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney):** Member for Welland.

The Minister of Community and Social Services has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. This House stands adjourned until Tuesday, February 24, at 9 of the clock. Good evening.

*The House adjourned at 1704.*



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
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Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
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Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
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Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
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Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
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Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
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Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
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## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

### Morris Newspaper Group

Ms. Lisa MacLeod .....4949

### Hospital funding

Mr. Paul Miller.....4949

### Santé wine festival

Mr. Mike Colle.....4949

### Cardiac care

Mrs. Christine Elliott.....4949

### Winterlude

Mr. Yasir Naqvi .....4950

### Infrastructure funding

Mr. Garfield Dunlop .....4950

### Thunder Bay Blues Festival

Mr. Bill Mauro .....4950

### Renewable energy

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti .....4951

### Energy conservation

Mr. Pat Hoy.....4951

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI

### Green Energy and Green Economy Act, 2009, Bill 150, Mr. Smitherman / Loi de 2009 sur l'énergie verte et l'économie verte, projet de loi 150, M. Smitherman

First reading agreed to.....4951

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES

### Renewable energy and energy conservation

Hon. George Smitherman.....4951

### Renewable energy and energy conservation

Mr. John Yakabuski .....4953

### Renewable energy and energy conservation

Mr. Peter Tabuns.....4953

## PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

### Sales tax

Mr. Frank Klees .....4954

### Long-term care

Mme France Gélinas .....4954

## Employment insurance

Mr. Pat Hoy.....4955

## Hospital funding

Mr. Norm Miller.....4955

## Child custody

Mr. Jim Brownell .....4955

## Sales tax

Mr. Norm Miller.....4955

## Multiple myeloma

Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....4956

## Multiple myeloma

Mr. Bas Balkissoon .....4956

## Child care

Mr. Norm Miller.....4956

## Hospital funding

Mr. Bob Delaney .....4956

## Firearms control

Mr. Mike Colle.....4956

## Lupus

Mr. Kim Craitor .....4957

## Tom Longboat

Mr. Mike Colle.....4957

## Community mediation

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti.....4957

## ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

### Family Statute Law Amendment Act, 2009, Bill 133, Mr. Bentley / Loi de 2009 modifiant des lois en ce qui concerne le droit de la famille, projet de loi 133, M. Bentley

Mr. Peter Kormos .....4958

Hon. Christopher Bentley.....4964

Mrs. Christine Elliott.....4965

Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....4965

Mr. Bob Delaney .....4965

Mr. Peter Kormos .....4966

Mr. Bob Delaney .....4966

Mr. Norman W. Sterling .....4968

Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....4968

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri.....4969

Mr. Mike Colle.....4969

Mr. Bob Delaney .....4969

Hon. Monique M. Smith .....4970

Mr. Garfield Dunlop.....4970

Mr. Peter Kormos .....4971

Mr. Mike Colle.....4971

Hon. Monique M. Smith .....4971

Ms. Laurel C. Broten.....4972

Mr. Norm Miller.....4973



Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....	4973
Mr. Shafiq Qaadri .....	4973
Mr. Mike Colle .....	4974
Ms. Laurel C. Broten .....	4974
Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....	4974
Ms. Laurel C. Broten .....	4977
Ms. Sylvia Jones .....	4977
Mr. Peter Kormos .....	4977
Mr. Jeff Leal .....	4978
Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....	4978
Mr. Khalil Ramal .....	4978
Mrs. Christine Elliott .....	4980
Mr. Mike Colle .....	4980
Ms. Laurel C. Broten .....	4981
Mr. Pat Hoy .....	4981
Mr. Khalil Ramal .....	4981
Second reading debate adjourned .....	4982

# CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Monday 23 February 2009 / Lundi 23 février 2009

## Ontario budget

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer .....	4937
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	4937
Hon. Monique M. Smith .....	4937
The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters).....	4937

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Bill Mauro .....	4937
Mr. Garfield Dunlop .....	4937
Mr. Rosario Marchese .....	4937
Mr. Khalil Ramal .....	4937
Mrs. Julia Munro .....	4937
Mrs. Liz Sandals .....	4938
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	4938
Mr. Bob Delaney .....	4938
Hon. Monique M. Smith .....	4938
Mrs. Maria Van Bommel .....	4938
Mr. Bruce Crozier .....	4938
The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters).....	4938

## Premier's attendance

Mr. Tim Hudak .....	4938
Hon. Monique M. Smith .....	4938
The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters).....	4938

## ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

### Ontario economy

Mr. Tim Hudak .....	4938
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	4939

### Rural health services

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer .....	4939
Hon. David Caplan .....	4940

### Child protection

Mr. Howard Hampton .....	4940
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	4940

### Child protection

Mr. Howard Hampton .....	4941
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	4941

### Hospital funding

Mr. Frank Klees .....	4942
Hon. George Smitherman .....	4942

## Green power generation

Mr. Paul Miller .....	4943
Hon. George Smitherman .....	4943

## Tourism

Mr. Bruce Crozier .....	4943
Hon. Monique M. Smith .....	4943

## Automotive industry

Mr. Ted Chudleigh .....	4944
Hon. Michael Bryant .....	4944

## Community colleges collective bargaining

Mr. Rosario Marchese .....	4944
Hon. Peter Fonseca .....	4945

## Hospital services

Mr. Yasir Naqvi .....	4945
Hon. David Caplan .....	4945

## Public transit

Ms. Lisa MacLeod .....	4946
Hon. George Smitherman .....	4946

## Manufacturing jobs

Mr. Paul Miller .....	4946
Hon. Michael Bryant .....	4946
Hon. Peter Fonseca .....	4947

## Small business

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde .....	4947
Hon. Harinder S. Takhar .....	4947

## Child protection

Mrs. Julia Munro .....	4947
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	4947

## Diagnostic services

Mr. Michael Prue .....	4948
Hon. David Caplan .....	4948

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Hon. George Smitherman .....	4948
Mr. Mike Colle .....	4948
Hon. Monique M. Smith .....	4948
Mr. Phil McNeely .....	4948
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	4948
Mr. Bas Balkissoon .....	4948
Mr. Bob Delaney .....	4948
Mr. Reza Moridi .....	4948

*Continued on inside back cover*



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## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 39<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

**Tuesday 24 February 2009**

**Mardi 24 février 2009**

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 24 February 2009

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 24 février 2009

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the nondenominational prayer.

*Prayers.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS AMENDMENT ACT (TEMPORARY HELP AGENCIES), 2009

### LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES NORMES D'EMPLOI (AGENCES DE PLACEMENT TEMPORAIRE)

Resuming the debate adjourned on February 18, 2009, on the motion for second reading of Bill 139, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 in relation to temporary help agencies and certain other matters / *Projet de loi 139, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi en ce qui concerne les agences de placement temporaire et certaines autres questions.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further debate?

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I'm pleased to join the debate on Bill 139, the Employment Standards Amendment Act, 2008, that was introduced on December 9 of last year.

Since this bill was introduced, we have done some consultations on it and found that not everyone is happy with the direction that the government is going with this bill. The minister's rhetoric doesn't seem consistent with what this bill will actually do or not do.

My party will be looking forward to this bill going to committee so that it can be studied and we can hear from some in the industry who would like to see positive changes that will still allow temporary hiring agencies to operate in Ontario.

While I appreciate the rhetoric that the government members have used when it comes to this bill, I find it hard to believe that with the economy in the situation that it is, with all of the issues facing this government, they would choose at this time to bring forward a bill like this.

I have been an MPP and a member of this House for approximately a year and a half, and I haven't had one single call or conversation with a constituent who is concerned with this issue. Certainly this isn't a huge crisis in the world of labour that should take up valuable legislative time when there are far more pressing matters that we could be dealing with. I don't get the sense that On-

tarians are seized with cracking down on temporary agencies. I think they would much prefer if we were debating a budget or some kind of effort so that the citizens of Ontario think that we care and wish to act on their issues.

However, more to the point of this particular bill, one of the concerns we have had with this bill is that we believe that the government has taken the position that all temporary agencies are bad and that they all need to be improved. What we believe is that you shouldn't treat the good agencies the same as the bad agencies; you cannot paint the industry with a broad brush. If this bill is not amended, it will cause considerable problems, not just with temporary agencies but with companies that use them. Right now, with the economy going as badly as it is, government actions that are going to put more people out of work and make it harder for others to find work need to be stopped.

The government may have the right intention on this bill, but we don't believe they did the homework necessary to completely understand its implications. To give you some examples of why we need changes, many in our caucus have heard from the Association of Canadian Search, Employment and Staffing Services, or ACSESS, who represent many temporary agencies. They presented us with three technical changes to the bill that need to be made in order for their industry to remain viable and thrive. Now, remember, when their industry is viable, people go to work, so I believe we need to listen to them and act on some of their suggestions. One of the stats that I did learn in some of the background is that approximately 11% of employment in Ontario is through temporary agencies.

One of their biggest concerns is around termination and severance. What the government is proposing is that after 35 weeks of not being sent on an assignment, an employee is terminated and severance needs to be paid. ACSESS pointed out to us that this clause will cause significant harm to term employees in Ontario. Short-term workers who are unemployed or underemployed are the ones who are most in need of work. Staffing companies will be forced to make a decision as to whether they can place that person consistently, and if not, they won't hire them for term work or will terminate them prior to the three months. The severance issue alone will erect new barriers to job creation. On our side of the House, we want to make sure that barriers are taken down. We also think that this clause can be fixed in committee, and I hope that the government will give consideration to our and the third party's amendments that we will be bringing forward.



One of the other issues we have heard a lot about is the idea that the government is going to crack down and restrict the fees that staffing services charge when a placement gets hired full-time. Generally speaking, many in the industry will charge a fee in the first six months but not after that. I'm not sure how big an issue this actually is; a company in my riding said that they support a number of these changes because they think it will help drive out the unscrupulous operators.

First, the client of a staffing service is a company. The person who is placed is not the client. ACSESS raised some serious concerns with using the Employment Standards Act as a tool to regulate how two businesses deal with each other. The Employment Standards Act governs how employees and employers relate to each other, not how two businesses relate to each other. Temporary agencies incur significant costs when it comes to advertising, recruiting, screening and so forth. There's something to be said for allowing them to function without the arbitrary limitations and regulations put on them by government. This particular clause does not benefit a worker in any way at all. What it does do is put up another barrier to job creation; our party believes in taking down barriers to job growth.

The current government of Mr. McGuinty is doing its best to stifle entrepreneurship and ingenuity. With bills like this—this is the best they can do? I would be surprised if any of your constituency offices have had any calls complaining about temporary agencies, yet here we are, dealing with it. What we should be dealing with today is a budget. The government had to have pre-budget hearings completed so that we could have an early budget. Now they tell us that the budget will be as late in the fiscal year as it could possibly be. Mr. McGuinty and his government should be showing the people of Ontario what their plan is to get people back to work, to keep the economy moving and to get jobs created in this province. They won't do that. I believe it's because they have no idea how to deal with this crisis. But why would we expect them to act any differently? It was on this government's watch that we went from a have to a have-not province. The government barely blinked its eyes at that.

Governments around the world have been moving quickly to do what they can to deal with the worldwide recession. The United States government has moved quickly. The Canadian government has moved. Quebec and BC have started moving as well. Dealing with this economic crisis is what governments do, except here in this province. The McGuinty government is frozen like a deer in the headlights. They know there's a problem—he said so just a few weeks ago—but seem afraid to do anything. We don't think that is acceptable. That's why we have presented our economic plan and we have stuck with it. We thought—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** You're supposed to stick to speaking to the bill too.

0910

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Yes. I'm going to get right back to that. I think that it's time for this government to come to the table with a meaningful package of reforms that

will show that they understand the people are concerned about jobs. That's why we think the debate on Bill 139 should move ahead and go to committee as soon as possible. Don't waste this Legislature's valuable time on issues that Ontarians don't care about.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It will be my pleasure and privilege to speak about the dignity of work and how this bill falls into that in a few minutes at great length, but suffice it to say, I couldn't disagree more than with the previous speaker from Sarnia-Lambton.

In fact, what we need is this bill and a whole lot more. We need a complete revamp of the Employment Standards Act, we need a living wage of at least \$10.25 an hour, we need equal pay for equal work, we need limits on the time that people spend in temp work before they become full-time, we need card-check certification, we need anti-scab legislation, we need sectoral bargaining, and finally, we need enforcement of the employment standards we already have, which we don't have.

So I'll certainly be privileged to speak at length about all of those topics and about how this bill is really kind of like the icing without the cake. We in Ontario, particularly at a time of recession, need a lot more than just this kind of photo-op bill. We need something with substance; we need something that's going to address the fact that we now have in Ontario 37% of the workforce working in precarious employment—most of those, women; most of those, people of colour; most of those, people who are immigrants to this province and deserve better. Their rights have not been considered in the past, and their dignity of work has not been considered.

I'm in a unique position to speak to this bill, in fact, because unlike anyone else in this House, I owned an agency, and I'm also the employment standards critic. I worked through an agency, owned an agency, am standing here as an employment standards critic and the small business critic. So I look forward to speaking to all aspects of this bill as it relates to agency work, as it relates to the employees that they employ and as it relates, as I said, to the bigger, fuller picture of employment standards in Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Ottawa Centre.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you very much, Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to respond to my colleague from Sarnia-Lambton, to talk about Bill 139, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 in relation to temporary help agencies and certain other matters.

This piece of legislation is extremely important because it really brings the temporary jobs, those individuals who are employed through temporary agencies, into the scope of the Employment Standards Act. We know that the act exists to protect the rights of employees when they are working in employment situations. Thus far, this legislation has precluded people who work on a temporary basis, who are employed through temporary agencies.

It's an important step; it's a step in the right direction. Most importantly, it's a step to ensure that as this govern-



ment moves forward with its poverty reduction strategy, we put safeguards in place that will ensure that the rights of those individuals, those working families within our communities who are working very hard through temporary agencies, are protected in their employment, that they are not taken advantage of, that they are able to take as much of their pay as they make home so they can spend that money on themselves and on their families within our economy.

This legislation I also see going hand in hand with the payday loan legislation which the McGuinty government just passed here, another very important piece of legislation to ensure that we provide the safeguards necessary for our working families, not to mention the minimum wage increases which this government has put in place, which will be seeing the minimum wage rise to \$10.25 by next year. All these steps go hand in hand in ensuring that our working families have the tools necessary to succeed in the community.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I want to congratulate my colleague from Sarnia-Lambton for putting together a good presentation on Bill 139.

I think we ought to look a little bit deeper into this bill as well, and really look at what are going to be the consequences and the effects. I know it's well-intended and offering up more protection, but is it going to reduce temporary employment? Is it going to restrict employers from hiring temporary workers? The people in that industry suggest that it will.

We also have to look at this Liberal government, what they're saying about removing barriers and restrictions and having too much red tape in this province. Then another red tape bill comes in.

We know that they're going to hire another 100 employment standards officers into the bureaucracy at the Ministry of Labour. Right now, over 50% of the employees in that ministry are enforcement and compliance officers, and now we're going to add another 100 and add another \$10 million to the cost.

I'd like to comment on the member from the opposite side who mentioned that the Liberals want people to take home as much money as possible from their paycheques. Well, they can't take a lot of money home if you keep taxing and spending and hiring more and more bureaucracy. That should be evident; that doesn't need anybody else to go to a committee. We can't keep increasing the costs of doing business and then suggest at the same time that you want to have people taking more money home.

Let's reduce some of these barriers and expenses.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Well, my, my, my. They're still calling for more deregulation in the face of everything we're seeing in the world economy today. The market went down by how much yesterday—300 points? And we've still got Conservatives who are standing there with the old mantra that you need more deregulation, you've

got to get government out of the way of business? These guys just don't learn. At least George Bush started to get it at the end. He had a policy with which he wanted to nationalize banks. He was more progressive than the Conservative Party of Ontario. I just say, my, my, my. Sometimes a lesson is hard-learned.

I want to say to the member from Sarnia-Lambton that I was interested to see that he said nobody's interested in this issue and hardly anybody is getting any phone calls. Nothing could be further from the truth. Listen, I've been travelling around this province along with my fellow colleagues who are running for the leadership of the Ontario New Democratic Party. At almost every public event we go to, this issue is raised, and it is because it is an issue out in Ontario.

People are seeing that more and more jobs that used to be full-time jobs, that were directly created by the employers themselves, are now being farmed out through temporary agencies. Why? Because you can get around many of the provisions of the Employment Standards Act, everything from holidays to the amount of pay that you get and the number of benefits that you may get as a result of working for the employer directly. So people get it. The average worker out there understands that temporary work placement agencies are not necessarily a good thing for the province of Ontario.

I would say this as well: There's something to be said about allowing temporary agencies to function in the first place. I was talking to an individual about three, four months ago who had himself set up a temporary work agency. He used to work for one of the Ontario government ministries when the Tories were in power. He was on a particular project, and when that project was going to be ramped up, he went out and started his own temporary work agency. He was making oodles of money sitting at home and sending people there because he was keeping 30% back for himself. Is that fair to workers?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes the time for questions and comments. I will return to the member for Sarnia-Lambton.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I'd like to thank the members from Parkdale-High Park, Ottawa Centre, Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington, and Timmins-James Bay. I thank the different people who tried to paint me as a rabid capitalist just for wanting to see free enterprise and people prosper in some jobs in this province.

I don't have a problem with the overall intent of the bill. I just tried to point out that at this time there are other, just as important items that we should be debating in this House.

I've spoken with people at a number of these temporary agencies, and they don't have a problem with the overall thrust of the bill. They said it will force out the unscrupulous people anyway. What we would like to do, on our side of the House, is see it go to committee; make those improvements that people point out to us when we have committee. We can have the labour community come in. Also, the temporary agencies, like ACSESS and others, can come in and present their side of the story to



all the members of the committee. At that time I'm sure everyone would agree that there's no legislation that's perfect when it's first drafted and that we would like to work with all three parties: the opposition—I mean the government party—the third party and ourselves—

0920

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I'm getting there ahead of ourselves, eh, Mike? Anyway, we'd like to work together to try to make this bill better for the workers of Ontario and for the province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** As I said before, it is a pleasure and a privilege to rise and to speak about what I hope is the dignity of work in the province of Ontario, which is certainly not the state we find ourselves in now.

Right now, about 37% of our workforce, as I said earlier, mainly women, people of colour and new immigrants, are working in precarious jobs. That is to say they don't know when their job will end. Many of them don't have anything but the most basic mandated benefits. They don't have any pension plan and, quite frankly, they don't have much recourse to the halls of power either. What we're talking about is a very large group of people. In the United States, just to the south of us, you're looking at the largest employer being Manpower, a temporary agency. The largest employer in the United States is a temporary agency. The question to my mind is, how ethical is that?

We're a society that deals with lots of stuff, and the stuff is made by people. It's produced by people from offices to factories. We often think, or perhaps we should think more, about the labour that goes into the pens, the glasses, the paper that we use.

We know that in this province we've lost almost 300,000 well-paying manufacturing jobs. The government across the aisle professes to have created more jobs than they've lost, but what kind of jobs are those? These are low-paying jobs, many of them precarious jobs, temporary jobs, jobs without anything but the most basic of benefits, with no security and with no pensions, of course. That's what we're replacing good work with. We're replacing good work with poor work. We're doing that not just in Ontario but around the world. I mean, when we think about how much is produced in China and under what conditions, we should be ashamed as consumers, never mind as producers. When we think about huge towns that have been given over to sweatshops in the global economy, is that what we want as our future in this province? I'd say no, absolutely not.

When it comes to Bill 139, what are we dealing with here? Are we dealing with something that will substantially change what labour looks like in this province? I would say, and the New Democratic Party would say with me, absolutely not. Is it, again, a step in the right direction? As I've said, it's kind of like the icing with no cake. It's tinkering around the edges of the problem.

The problem is the difference in the way we see the dignity of work. That's the larger ethical problem. We, for some reason, as a community in Ontario no longer see it as a problem that someone works 40 hours a week and can't pay the rent or feed their children. I have many people in south Parkdale, in my riding, who work 40 hours a week at minimum wage and have to use a food bank. Now somehow collectively, we've said that's okay.

I would submit to this group and to you, Mr. Speaker, that that's not okay, that that's absolutely unfair. I grew up in an Ontario, quite frankly, where that wasn't considered fair, where it wasn't considered *de rigueur* to see people lining up at community soup kitchens, sleeping on the grates at night and working hard all week with no expectation of ever getting ahead, of ever getting their children ahead, of even paying for the basics out of their pocketbook.

In fact, we know, because we've been told by over 60 economists across the country, that the real minimum wage has significantly gone down since the 1970s, that if we were to pay the minimum wage today based on the consumer price index that we were paying in the 1970s, we'd be paying about \$10 an hour right now. What is that really? Even if we were paying \$10.25 right now, we'd only be paying just over the poverty line. So the ethical question, which to me is always the major question in these debates: Is it ethically and morally right to pay someone below the poverty line in a city like Toronto, in a province like Ontario, for their work? Is that dignity of work? I would submit that it is not.

What we in the New Democratic Party see is a real need for a complete overhaul of the Employment Standards Act to reflect the new reality in which we find ourselves. Quite frankly, there is some global imperative to this as well and there are some global responses. We don't need to reinvent the wheel here in terms of employment standards or Bill 139, we just need to look to other jurisdictions.

Other countries—New Zealand, Finland—have expanded the scope of their employment standards to address exactly what we are facing here: atypical or non-standard work. Germany has expanded its definition of "employee" to reduce the opportunity to disguise the employment relationship: in other words, an employee working for a client company of a temporary agency, but seen as an employee of the agency. The International Labour Organization has developed conventions on home work, part-time work and employment agencies. The economic union in Europe has established directives on part-time and fixed-term contracts to bring equity between atypical or non-standard work and permanent employees.

The European Union, in fact, has brought in what we think should be brought in immediately, and what OPSEU happens to agree with, and that is equal pay for equal work. What is the concept that the European Union has brought in that would really suffice to address most of our problems with precarious labour right here? That concept is a simple one, a very ethical one. It simply



says: equal pay for equal work. That would be dignity of work.

What does that mean? That means if you are the full-time employee doing bookkeeping in an office or you are a part-time temporary agency employee doing bookkeeping in the same office, the same job in the same office should get the same pay. That is not the case in Ontario. In Ontario, the agency employee will get substantially less for doing the same work as the full-time employee. That's our reality. I would submit that reality is absolutely unfair and unethical.

So instead of really attacking temporary agencies, the icing, we should be attacking the cake, the problem. The problem is we do not have equality of pay for work. We don't have it in Ontario; we simply don't have it. I would also submit that if temporary agencies marked up their third, or whatever they do, over that basic salary, that it would become real money to a company instead of cheaper to go through an agency. It wouldn't affect their profit margin at all and it certainly would be better for the employees. Of course, all the other things included in Bill 139 should be part and parcel of an overarching employment standards response to the issue of undignified, precarious work.

Also, just to go on to other jurisdictions, the UK government has finally recognized the need for regulating temp agency work and providing for equal treatment. This is notable, since the UK has one of the largest temp industries in the EU. Here is a country that has a large temporary industry and that is addressing this problem in a real way. The UK government agreed to a deal on May 20, 2008, between unions and employers that will see agency workers in the UK receive equal treatment. Again, it's equal pay for equal work.

It's interesting that also in the UK—looking back not too long ago when this House was brought back to look at the CUPE 3903 strike at York University, where you have this huge pool of contract labourers, belying the fact that temporary and precarious work is the domain only of the disenfranchised, only of those without enough education, only of those in the poor or marginalized aspects of our community. No. Temporary, contract, precarious work is also the domain of those with PhDs, contract faculty. Our universities are built on the backs of temporary, precarious workers—educated workers—which quite frankly also sort of puts the finger in the face of Richard Florida and those who would say we should become a creative class of Ontarians. Well, here we have not only educated but many of them very educated people who've done all the right things, according to Richard Florida and his ilk. They have their PhDs, many of them, in areas that he cited in his report, and yet what are they doing? As NOW Magazine once said in its famous headline, "Did You Know that Your Professor Makes Less than You Do?" They're working for less, many of them, than what we would consider a living wage. There's a pool of 900 workers at York University, out of which very few have any remote hope of being hired on full time or for tenure-track situations.

0930

In the UK, what have they done with that? They have addressed that, not by tinkering around the surface of it but by addressing the problem of post-secondary institutions exploiting contract labour. They have said that you can teach for four years on a contract basis, but after that you must be hired full-time.

I remember one CUPE 3903 worker who said to me that she had been teaching on a contract basis at York University for 16 years. Every year she has to reapply for her job. Every year she may or may not get that job. She has a PhD, but every year no job security, minimum benefits, working for half, probably, of what the tenure-track professor was making. This is unconscionable. This is unethical. This is not dignity of work in the province of Ontario.

So we know that other jurisdictions do it better. My husband and I had the great good fortune—and I know many of you have heard about our trip to Sweden, but, hey, it's eye-opening for a social democrat to see social democracy in action. There you have a country where 85% of the workforce is unionized. Let's contrast it with ours in the low 30-something. To really have dignity of work, you need to be unionized. We know this because of the sweep of history, and we so quickly forget history. We forget that there was, at one point, child labour. We forget that there was, at one point in my lifetime, "Help Wanted: Male" and "Female." We forget that every advance, from the 40-hour week to overtime to statutory holidays, to the end of child labour, to equal rights for women in the labour force, all of these rights have been fought for by the union movement and won. Certainly what we need is more organized labour.

What does it mean in Sweden to have the difference, 85% unionized labour? To be fair, some of those unions are "company" unions, so-described, but still, it's a certain advance over what we've got here. It means that when you go into a McDonald's in Stockholm you are served by somebody who is a unionized employee—in McDonald's, of all places. Guess what that means to that unionized employee? It means that they've got bargaining rights and better benefits, that they earn about \$12 an hour in comparison to our employees here. The equivalent of an MPP we sat down and had lunch with over there, who, by the way, was a Liberal, said that if they weren't unionized, nobody would eat there. That's the consciousness of a community that sees dignity of work and that believes in the ethicality of the dignity of work and believes that you need that to have a just society.

Sweden is no bigger than Ontario. It's nine million people; we're 13 million, more or less, here. It's smaller than we are. It's as multicultural as we are, too. I've heard that rather racist argument, "Well, they're a monoculture." No they're not. They're one of the most multicultural communities in Europe. This is a community that also has free post-secondary education. Imagine that revolutionary concept. It also has a dental care program and medicare. And yet, guess what? It still has Sony Ericsson, H&M, Ikea, Volvo; capitalism is alive and well in



Sweden and yet somehow they manage to extend dignity to their workforce, even those at the lower echelon, in the service sector jobs, like McDonald's. They manage to extend some dignity to them. That's what we're speaking about in the New Democratic Party. We're just speaking about dignity.

I was on the radio yesterday talking about the push-back over the government's increase in the minimum wage. Well, not only do I disagree with the person who was against me on that radio debate that the minimum rate should go up—of course it should—I think it should go up more. It should go up to at least above the poverty line and then be indexed to inflation. We all remember that wonderful campaign, the \$10 minimum wage campaign, where, really, town halls were full across this province and this government was swamped with at least 10,000 e-mails demanding a living wage, but we don't have a living wage by that definition yet.

Again, this is a global movement: In Mexico they're having demonstrations for a dignified living wage. It's everywhere, this demand, and the demand at its basis is about ethics. At its basis it's about dignity to labour. It's about knowing that you're valued, and—let's face it—we value people in proportion to what we pay them. We know we do. We pretend we don't. But if we don't, then why is it so necessary that our CEOs in Canada make more than they ever have in history? The average CEO right now makes between \$9 million and \$10 million a year, yet nobody is objecting to their pay raises. No, people object to the pay raises at the lower echelon.

Well, I ask you: If we pay people their value, if we recognize people's labour with what we pay them, if this is a reflection of the dignity we accord their labour, then is a CEO worth a thousand times more than a woman working in a factory at minimum wage? How on earth is this possible? How on earth do we tell that person working at minimum wage that their life and their labour—because let's face it, our labour is a lot of our lives. Most of what we spend our day doing is working, whoever we are, if we're in the workforce. Do we tell those people that they don't deserve the dignity of living above the poverty line, but the CEO, yes, they're worth a thousand times more even, quite frankly, if they run their company into the ground?

On my Facebook page, I challenged some of my friends to come up with some innovative, witty responses to changing or assisting our economy. One of the wittier of them was a young man who wrote in and said: "Why don't we all start car companies and just run them into the ground?" I thought that was good. Is that what it takes to get the government's attention, to get assistance? Is that what it takes to get help from the government, that we are the CEOs of large corporations, run them into the ground and then expect the government to bail us out? Why do we not afford dignity to those at the lower echelon of the earning spectrum, to bail them out when the recession hits? Where's the bailout for them? Where are the millions for them? Certainly, the very least we could do—and Bill 139 is, trust me, the least we could do

when it comes to temporary agencies and their clients—is to raise the minimum wage above the poverty limit.

The other thing that we need to do, as I said, is equal pay for equal work. This is a much more elegant solution than what we see in Bill 139. In any employment standards rewrite, we need to enshrine that.

Now, I want to talk from the small business side of my portfolio for a minute and also my experience as an agency owner. I started working, when I was a young woman after university, for Drake Personnel. Now Drake owns Office Overload, a Canadian company privately owned. It was a really eye-opening experience to work for a corporation like that, which was multinational in those days.

Quite frankly, it was one of the few places that a woman—then, as probably now—with a B.A. and nothing much else under her belt could get a job that would pay a living wage. We were paid reasonably well for what we did, with bonuses to boot. It was an also an interesting insight into corporate structure, the corporate structure that, unfortunately, is still the case in most corporations, which is to say that at Drake and at Office Overload, you had a lot of women working the phones. As you got up the corporate ladder, there were fewer and fewer women, until you got to the executive suite, where it was all men. Beyond the phones and the women working them were their temporary clients, who were mainly and mostly women too. So here you had a women-driven agency business dealing with women applicants mainly, servicing companies run by men. I can tell you, if you wanted to look at racism in that mix, that would hold too. You had mainly women, many of them of colour, working the phones and dealing with temporary applicants, many of them of colour, who were working in the offices for executive-suite-held companies made up of an incredible majority of white men. Quite frankly, unfortunately, that's still the case.

**0940**

For some plucky women working the phones in a sales environment who decided, "Enough of this. If there's money to be made, I'd like to keep it in my own pocket, thank you very much"—which is, after all, the entrepreneurial instinct that we pride ourselves on in this country and in this province. You decide at some point that you're going to go out and do it yourself and for yourself, which is exactly what I did and many women like me did. In fact, I think if you were to look at temporary agencies and permanent placement agencies across this province, you would see that the majority of them are still owned by women and still staffed by women. The difference for the smaller ones is that women own them, instead of the larger corporations owned by men.

So for those plucky women entrepreneurs who went forward, as I did, running a company—and it was a phenomenal success, I might say. I started that company with a \$5,000 loan and billed half a million in my first year, and billed it not by exploiting those who came through our doors but by enriching them, in fact. We're talking about back in the early 1980s. That was a quarter of a



century ago. We were mainly a permanent placement agency, I have to say, and I'll talk more about the difference between permanent and temporary in a minute. We paid our temporary employees \$10 an hour. That was 25 years ago. If you came through our agency and got a job filing, you got paid \$10 an hour, and I didn't know, quite frankly, many agencies that paid less. We marked up over that.

I also paid the women who worked with me as if they worked with me and not for me. So all of us made six figures back in those days. We did well. We were an all-women company, and we placed women not only in secretarial positions, but, for a change, moving them up the ladder in communications and PR and advertising, which were the major clients that we serviced.

What I found as an agency owner—and certainly, it was interesting to meet with those representatives from ACSESS because of my background—was that if there was racism, if there was an attempt to beat down wages, if there was an attempt to pay employees less than they were worth, not equal pay for equal work, it came more from our client companies, the big corporations that really, quite frankly, are shielded. They're invisible, they're anonymous, behind the agencies that service them. When Bill 139 comes into effect, which I assume it will, it will not touch those companies that hide behind the agencies that service them, when it comes to exploiting employees.

So, first of all, hats off to all of those, mainly women, who see an opportunity in the market to actually make a decent living and start their own companies. Certainly, hats off to those who run scrupulous, ethical businesses that recognize the value of an employee—and I'm not talking about those many that don't and those many that this bill attacks. Should they be out of business? Absolutely. Nobody in the agency business would argue that they shouldn't.

It's interesting that back in the early 1980s when I was in the business, it was illegal to charge a fee to an applicant. Here we are, in 2009—great progress, indeed—bringing in another bill that says it should be illegal to charge a fee to an applicant. I guess that's what passes as progress in the province of Ontario. What happened in the interim? What happened in the interim were the Harris years, which undid that law. So now here we are, bringing back what should have been all along. I don't see that, really, as progress; that's simply a rescinding of something onerous. There should never be a fee charged to an applicant from an agency.

Interestingly enough, though, there are huge loopholes in Bill 139 when it comes to charging fees for applicants, and that's something the New Democratic Party will be addressing at committee, because the way that temporary agencies are defined in this bill leaves a lot of unscrupulous agencies and middlemen and women out there who will not be covered by this bill. What do I mean by that? I will go into the incredible and wonderful work done by Workers' Action in some detail on this bill.

Suffice it to say that one of the most egregious abuses of the dignity of labour in this province is the way that

many cleaners in corporate buildings are treated. What agencies will do—although they don't call themselves agencies, so they won't be covered by Bill 139—what many of these cleaning contracting companies do is claim that their employees are independent contractors, not employees. In fact, some of them charge their independent contractors money to get them jobs cleaning the buildings that are their client companies. Not only do these poor, mainly immigrant—many of them not with English as a first language—individuals have to pay to get their work; they have to pay for their equipment and their cleaning products. Many of them get into a bidding situation, which should be highly illegal, just for the opportunity to work at all. And what do they make, when all is said and done and all of the fees and charges are paid? Many of them make below minimum wage. That goes on everywhere in the province of Ontario. It does not happen in Quebec, by the way, which has more forward-thinking legislation. It happens here. Unfortunately, that situation of cleaners in buildings will not be touched by Bill 139 because they don't bill themselves as temporary agencies. They don't call themselves that; they call themselves cleaning contracting firms.

Another group that Bill 139 doesn't touch at all because of its definition and because, in this case, they're actually excluded, is health care agency workers. Health care workers employed by agencies under contract with community care access centres can now get public holiday pay like other workers, but they are not considered covered until 2012. One might ask: Why is that? Why single out health care workers in an act like this? Why not everybody? There's a simple answer to that. Guess who their employer is: the Ontario government. Guess who would be liable for the extra costs of health care workers: the Ontario government, the Ministry of Health. So that's why they're excluded until 2012. It's easy to pass legislation when it affects somebody else, but when it gets a little too close to home and affects your own wallet, it's more problematic. That's what we see here. That is absolutely unacceptable, and we, the New Democratic Party, will fight tooth and nail that change in this bill.

Information about work assignments and employment standards rights: This is good. Yes, people should have information, but quite frankly, a member here mentioned the Payday Loans Act—another bit of “icing” legislation that doesn't affect the cake; another piece of legislation that doesn't really affect the rates charged to people who go to a payday lending place for a payday loan, but in some ways very similar to Bill 139 because one of the things that that Payday Loans Act does is demand that payday lenders post information about the real interest rates, the cost of rollover loans etc. Remember: We're dealing with basically a usurious industry here. They're loan sharks; let's call them what they are. They charge between 300% and 1,000% interest, and they still do—even after this bill will be passed. Imagine, if you're going to them—you're not going there because you have options; you're going there because you've run out of



any other options. You go to a payday lender because the bank won't give you credit. You go to a payday lender because a bank or a credit union won't give you an advance on your paycheck. That's why you'd go to them: because you're desperate, you're starving and you don't have any money, and they're the last place in town that will give you any money. Posting the rates for a person like that and all the downsides of going to them is not going to deter someone who is desperate; it's not going to. We have to protect them; payday lenders won't.

0950

The same thing happens here: Information about work assignments, information on employment standards rights is all well and good. All the information will probably be pretty negative, but the person who's going to the temporary agency for work is the one who can't get a permanent job, who can't get any other work. That's why they're there. Telling them, "Guess what? Unfortunately, you won't get this and that if you work through us, and this is your legal right and this is not your legal right"—you know, it's like reading contracts. We've all signed contracts with all that fine print. Who reads them? Nobody reads them. We trust. Maybe we're far too trusting as Ontarians; I think we are. But in this case, certainly people would trust and sign. It's not going to make any difference to the reality of their lives. It certainly isn't going to make any ethical, moral difference to the dignity in which they find themselves in the workplace.

The idea in Bill 139 that after six months the temporary agency cannot charge a fee, or can charge a fee up until that point—in other words, removing a barrier to permanent employment for the temporary employee working through that agency—is a step in the right direction. But—here is the big “but”—first of all, quite frankly, I think that there's something afoul of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in charging a fee for a temporary employee to go permanent. I quite frankly think that if these poor individuals who find themselves in that situation had good lawyers and could band together as a group, they could have a charter challenge on their hands, because I don't think you can prevent somebody from hiring somebody and I don't think, legally, you really can get away with preventing somebody from being hired. I think that's a charter challenge waiting to happen, and I certainly would advise those who are employees to think about it if the issue comes up in their own lives. It's very much like non-competition clauses. Many corporations ask you to sign a non-competition clause knowing full well that it really doesn't have a lot of legal weight behind it, that you can't prevent someone from earning a living. That's the reality. Much as this is a good thing, I wonder, in terms of the true reality of the lives of the individuals it affects, how effective it will be.

The other bizarre side effect of this little point, by the way—remember my background as somebody who owned a permanent agency. I think most of us in this chamber would agree that it's better to have a permanent job than to have a temporary one, and quite frankly, at no

time soon are executive recruitment firms going to disappear from our landscape. They are part of our landscape and, they would argue, for good reason, because if you're a company and you don't have a huge personnel department, or even if you do, sometimes you need an executive recruitment and outplacement firm. The government uses them; we all use them; everybody uses them. They're a fact of life in business, in capitalism. Unless we want to revamp capitalism—some of us might want to do that—they're always going to be here. That's essentially what I had when I was in the business.

What this funny little part of Bill 139 will do will be to encourage people to hire temporary employees rather than permanent ones. I just throw that out to the government because I wonder if they've considered the side effect of this aspect of the bill. In other words, if I can hire somebody through a temporary agency, be they an IT person, an engineer—remember, this is not just people doing bookkeeping and in the steno pool; these are agencies, many of them that place fairly high-paid individuals. If I were to hire them for six months and then get them for no extra cost, why would I ever place an order with an executive recruitment firm for the same person and pay a percentage of their salary, which would be way in excess of that six-month fee?

I really suggest that the government simply look at that angle of it. We haven't heard very much from permanent agencies and executive recruitment firms yet, but we might, because once they read the fine print of this bill, they may have an issue with it. Suffice it to say, though, that I don't think that under the charter you can prevent someone from hiring somebody without paying any fee at all. I would really be surprised to see a temporary agency challenge that if somebody held that up as a right, either as an employee or as an employer. Still, in all, it's good to remind people that we can't and should not restrain anybody from being hired by anybody at any time. So there is that. It could be strengthened; it might have problems.

Again, you see the kind of bill we're dealing with here, the kind of bill that plays at the periphery of the problem of precarious, undignified, unstable, unrewarded labour in the province by tinkering around the edges of one of the industries that services that problematic labour force instead of dealing with the problematic labour force and the problematic labour relations that it implies.

What else? If we are to have a dignified labour force and less precarious employment, we need something—and this is where the rewrite of the Employment Standards Act is so imperative. We need something that demands of a company—not the agencies that service the company, but the company that has full-time employees—that there be a limit to the number of hours worked on a temporary basis within the framework of that company, because we know that companies these days are using huge pools of temporary labour to replace dignified full-time jobs. We know that's what's going on; we can see it everywhere.

How do you attack that? You attack it by saying, “You know, there's a reason”—and there is a reason for temp-



orary help—"for temporary agencies." If somebody leaves on maternity leave, you need somebody to take over. You know it's not going to be full-time; you know it's going to be maybe nine months to a year that you need somebody. If somebody's sick or on leave, you need somebody for that week or two.

The European Union, I think, and very rightly, has looked at the limit of time that somebody works on a temporary basis. Now, of course, this has to be well done, because nobody would want to produce a scenario where people are simply firing and hiring to get around the spirit of the law by the letter of the law. You have to make sure it's that person who's hired on full-time.

We should not have the situation, as I described earlier, that I witnessed—CUPE 3903; a woman working 16 years on a contract basis. That should not be allowable in the province of Ontario. If you're working on a temporary assignment, it should be a temporary assignment and have clear, clear parameters. I would suggest that the clear parameter be a time frame and that the time frame be about a year, because, quite frankly, I can't foresee—prove me wrong—a situation where you would need a temporary—remember, in the true sense of the word "temporary"—employee for more than a year. So we need, in the Employment Standards Act, something that embeds the principle that temporary labour is exactly that—temporary—and that it doesn't go on forever. We need that.

So limits on temp work, minimum wage, equal pay for equal work, and then—this is so critical—we need to do everything in our power, in this government, to enable organized labour to organize. There's no other way of saying it than that. We need to do everything, from getting the votes counted at York University and others by OPSEU, to having card-check certification, not just for those in the construction trades but for everyone, so that that process can be democratic, so that it can't be marked by intimidation by employers; and, certainly, sectoral organizing, so that the same battle doesn't have to be fought over and over and over again.

This is something else that's very interesting that they do in Sweden—I call it the "Swedish way"—and, again, it's favourable to employers as well as employees, otherwise they wouldn't be doing so well—and that's sectoral organizing. That means that when a union comes up for renegotiation for their workforce, they do it together—all steelworkers, not company by company. They do this in Sweden; they do it with great good results both for companies and for the unions concerned. So that's what we need as well—sectoral organizing.

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Finally, and this is a huge topic that I'll spend some time on, no matter what we do when we look at the Employment Standards Act and we revamp it—and remember, the ethical, moral imperative is the dignity of human labour, the dignity of work. Essentially the philosophic and ethical undergirding of everything I've said is that whether you work on an assembly line or you work in the executive suite, your work should be dignified, you

should be rewarded above the poverty line for what it's worth, you should be able to hold your head up high when you go to work, and you should have rights, including the right to strike. That is then a dignified workplace. We want to make that available, as much as we can, to everyone. That undergirds everything.

But even if we were to rewrite the Employment Standards Act, including everything I have described in the last 40 minutes, we would still not be there unless we enforced it. Here is another problem. It's a very large problem with Bill 139 and all the bills, quite frankly, that this government has brought forward around the issue of employment standards, and that is that there's no law if it's not enforced. Many times I've spoken in many communities, particularly around the \$10 minimum wage campaign that we wage, and I've stood there and I've said, "We don't have employment standards in the province of Ontario." People say, "What do you mean, we don't have them? There's an act, isn't there? I mean, there's inspection"—because we don't enforce the act we have.

Now, I know the government has hired more inspectors. That's a good thing, but it's not enough, not nearly enough. A motion that I have on the order paper demands, because it's been so long coming and so long ignored, that 25% of all workplaces be inspected by employment standards, by the Ministry of Labour—25%. Why such a high figure? Because it's about 1% now—1%. That means if you're an employer, you have about a 1 in 100 chance of anybody from employment standards ever walking through your door.

What does that mean in terms of the ethicality and the dignity of labour? This is what it means for my constituents, and I'm sure we've all heard the stories: I have heard stories of people who have worked without getting paid at all, pure and simple, not at all. They worked for a week, and then the person said, "I didn't like what you did. Sorry, I'm not paying you." Now, who are these people? A lot of them, of course, don't know their rights. They're recent immigrants, some of them illegal immigrants. They have no recourse. Where do they take them? Are they going to fight through the bureaucracy of the Ministry of Labour to collect a couple of hundred dollars? No, they let it go and they move on. This happens all the time to immigrant communities, unfortunately. We know that the Ministry of Labour and employment standards has a huge, huge waiting list of cases, and it has a huge backlog of unpaid wages. We know that, because it's so difficult to collect, and really, the impetus to collect on your unpaid wages falls on the employee. Remember, we're not talking about CEOs with lawyers in their back pocket here. We're talking about people who work in the lower echelons of the pay scale, on the margins of our communities, in the minimum-wage or less-than-minimum-wage jobs. That's who we're talking about. That's who desperately needs an inspection from employment standards, not the corporate suite, and they don't come. Anybody who's ever spoken to a group of new immigrants in their riding will



have heard these stories. I've heard them. Certainly they're not often paid overtime when it's due. Holiday pay, which this bill enshrines for temporary workers—I know a lot of permanent workers don't get holiday pay. They don't get the benefits they're due because they don't know they're due, and their workplace has never been inspected and, quite frankly, probably never will be, at the current rate of the rollout of labour inspections. That's the situation in which we live.

I remember when I was first married, my husband was eventually in advertising, but in the graphic arts business, and he was working for somebody else, and the hours were outrageously long. He was paid on a salary; he was not paid hourly. But when you figured out his hourly rate, it was actually less than minimum wage. The laws around overtime, which were in place at the time, would have helped him, but it would have required him, then as now, to file a grievance, to come forward to talk about what was going on in the design shop. Now, unless you're in a huge company where you're one of 1,000 employees, your employer is going to know who filed a grievance, who complained about them. Do you think there aren't going to be reprisals for that? Even if you did it anonymously, do you think they won't figure out who filed a grievance anonymously?

Employment standards enforcement cannot fall upon the shoulders of employees, ever—ever—because there are too many checks and balances in the workplace to make it unlikely that they'll ever step forward, number one among which is that they'll lose their job, and they don't have the lawyers to fight in civil court to try to get the employer to pay them for what they lost. Only people with money, cultural capital, are able to do that. These folk won't. No, they'll just disappear into the crowd and go to work for another unscrupulous employer. The Ministry of Labour and employment standards needs to inspect at least 25% of all workplaces now and do one sweep of them. I can tell you that you would already uncover huge, huge abuses of the Employment Standards Act without even adding to it. So when we add to it, like Bill 139—in this case dealing with agencies alone and not the big picture, the problem—who's going to enforce it? Who's going to enforce this? Unless we hire more enforcement officers, unless we make it mandatory that a percentage of places of employment be inspected, this is just going to be another piece of legislation that only those who know it exists will enforce and find recourse to. Those who are working through temporary agencies are usually the least able to challenge this.

#### *Interjection.*

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** My friend over here says, "It's a good Liberal bill." Exactly. That's what a Liberal bill looks like: icing, no cake. It's fascinating too that even the agency advocates who say they support this bill because it will drive those fringe agencies—this is the same way that the payday lending association said, "We like the payday lending bill"—that that should be a red flag in and of itself—"because it drives the fringe elements out of business." Well, come on. Do we exist, as legislators,

to help one company fight against another? In a sense, this bill will do the same. It will help to weed out some of the competition for some others that can afford to raise their rates, etc. But really, will it? Will it even do that? That's a question. The fly-by-night temporary agency people that my friend Gilles Bisson was talking about, who operate out of apartments and don't even have offices, who place their friends from immigrant communities for a mark-up, who basically break everything that Bill 139 is trying to address and every employment standards part of the Employment Standards Act is trying to address—will it really touch those people? This is the quintessential Liberal bill, in that sense.

This is like the bill that our friend Mike Colle brought in which said that people driving with illegal guns in cars should be illegal. Yes, sure, they should be illegal. They're already illegal. Let's make them more illegal. Let's make them illegal and they'll lose their driver's licence. Do you really think that somebody driving in a car with a loaded gun cares about losing their driver's licence? Come on. Do you really think that a person operating out of their apartment, placing friends and neighbours or friends of friends completely under the radar of the law, breaking every employment standard regulation, going against Bill 139, is going to stop their activities because we passed this bill? I wish they would. I wish it could effect that change. Quite frankly, it might even effect that change if there was enforcement, but there isn't. There simply isn't enforcement. We don't have enforcement of what we've already got, and so Bill 139, like so much other paper that's produced by this place, will sit on a shelf somewhere, drive a couple of smaller business people out of business, leave most of the abusers beyond the reach of the law and still not—and this is really what we need here in this province—add to the dignity of labour, the dignity of someone working.

#### **1010**

Now, I've spoken for almost 50 minutes without telling a story about someone who is actually affected by all this, so I will. There are a myriad of them. I've told in passing one such story about an immigrant who wasn't paid for the work she did. But what about the ones who are paid? I can think of cases in my own family. Certainly, if you go back in my family one generation, you're talking about first-generation immigrants. Some of them from England, some of them from Italy—cold, Mr. Speaker—some of them from Portugal. Sorry, flu is going around.

My mother-in-law from Portugal came over, worked in houses cleaning, like so many people, then worked as a health care worker—one of the ones excluded from this bill until 2012—needed to retire for health reasons just recently—thank you very much; honour among thieves—and retired without any pension or benefits even though she had worked her entire life in this industry. Essentially, the industry acted as a temporary agency, sending her out here and there to client companies. This is happening to our own, ladies and gentlemen. For those who are watching at home, you know somebody who is being touched by this industry. When 37% of the labour



force is working in precarious employment, you know it touches everyone. This bill will not help my mother-in-law. This bill will not help other workers like her until 2012. This is another classic government move, isn't it? "We'll do it after the next election." MPAC overhaul: "We'll do it after the next election; we'll freeze property taxes now." "We'll do it after the next election," closing the coal-fired plants. Here's another instance of that. "We'll do it after the next election," cover health care workers, community care access workers under this bill.

I know a woman in my riding who worked many years, always on temporary assignments, made minimum wage at all of them. She would come home, feed her children, get them doing their homework, put them to bed and then go out and work for another temporary industry, and that is the cleaning company contractors. She would go out and work at night cleaning buildings as an independent contractor, so-called—of course she wasn't; she was a temporary applicant, not covered by Bill 139—to clean companies and then work through another temporary agency during the day. At the end of all this outrageous labour, at the end of a week, she was also one of the ones who I handed a free turkey to at the food bank just before Christmas because she didn't have enough money, even with those two jobs, as a single parent to really make ends meet. She said to me, "You know, really, at the end of the day, after deductions, I would have more time with my children and they would have a better quality of life if I were on social assistance." Quite frankly, I couldn't argue with her. She was right. She might clear a little less on social assistance, but then she wouldn't have to do back-breaking labour for 10, 12 hours a day, and she would have more time with her children and she wouldn't have to find neighbours to look after them, pay other people etc. and the cost associated with getting to work, transportation etc. I mean, she's not alone. Even middle-class women find themselves in this position because of the lack of dignity of work. Even middle-class women find themselves unable to really work with any sense of fair play because of the expenses associated with working.

I see that the hour is drawing nigh. I know I still have about five minutes left and I will save my five minutes for tomorrow to continue on speaking about this bill and to summarize exactly what I've been saying. Suffice it to say, we need to keep in mind, when dealing with Bill 139, what it doesn't do. It doesn't give equal pay for equal work. It doesn't give a living minimum wage. It doesn't extend the right to organize in labour for a vast majority of Ontarians. It doesn't put a limit on the length of time that people work temporarily before they must be hired full-time. It doesn't do that. Most importantly, it doesn't affect the client companies that the temporary agencies deal with, that are the source of the problem. Thank you.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you. This House stands in recess until 10:30, later on this morning.

*The House recessed from 1016 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** I'd like to introduce some family and friends of page Patrick Mott. This morning in the gallery are his mother, Ruth Anne Mott; his father, Robert Mott; an aunt, Jeananne Ralph; an uncle, Dave Mott; a cousin, Roberta Jagoe; his great-aunt, Alice O'Neill; a cousin, Shelagh O'Neill; and a friend, Kathleen Maley. They're here this morning, and we'd like to welcome them.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ENERGY RATES

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** My question is for the Premier. The proposed Green Energy Act raises an alarming number of questions. During these times of economic downturn, when everyone is counting their pennies, Ontarians want to know how much more they're going to have to pay to heat their homes and keep the lights on under this new legislation. Can you tell us that, Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'm very pleased to take this question and I'm very much looking forward to having the opportunity to hear debates in this Legislature and to create opportunities for the public to speak to this as well.

We are very pleased and proud to be able to introduce the bill, as we did yesterday. It is going to enable us to create new, clean, green jobs, it's going to enable us to generate clean, green electricity and it's going to enable more of us to do our part in the fight against climate change. So I really think it is the sweet spot of sweet spots.

The price of electricity from wind is higher than it is from dirty coal. The price of electricity from the sun, harnessing that power, is more expensive than dirty, fired coal. Those are true. But on the other side, there's also a very important aspect to our new legislation, which is going to ensure that we have more energy conservation to keep our bills down.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I didn't get the answer there. Yesterday, the Minister of Energy indicated that there would essentially be no increase as a result of this bill. He said, "One per cent per year for the next three years." If the minister thinks he can fool Ontarians with this sleight of hand, he's dead wrong. Yesterday he said there would be an initial increased investment of \$5 billion. When that amount is paid—and that's just for the transmission upgrades they're talking about—by 4.2 million electricity consumers, that calculates out to an extra \$1,200 per customer. Spread out over three years, that's a 30% increase, Minister, not a 1% increase.

Premier, explain to this House how you can promise a 1% increase by your own figures when the increase to consumers will be at least 30%.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** My honourable colleague is engaging in all kinds of speculation. I'll tell you where



he's on to something. My honourable colleague has said that he and his wife, along with their children, embarked on a program to conserve energy in their own home. They reduced the usage in their home by 40%. I want to commend him for that.

What we need to do and what we will continue to do is find more ways for more Ontarians, whether inside our schools, our hospitals, our industries or our homes, to use less electricity. At the end of the day, what is really important to Ontarians is their bill. We're going to do everything we can to create more opportunities for more Ontarians to keep that bill down and, ideally, like my honourable colleague, get it even lower.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I accept your unsolicited compliments. What I'd really like are some clear answers.

Ontarians were not fooled when Stéphane Dion tried to tell them that his Green Shift plan wasn't going to cost them a thing, and they're not going to be fooled by your plan. Yesterday, the minister held up Germany as a model. Well, the price of electricity in Germany is north of 22 cents a kilowatt hour. That's at least three times, three and a half times, the rate of electricity here, Mr. Premier. How can you stand there and tell Ontarians that their energy bills are not going to go up by more than a single percentage point per year? In fact, they're going through the roof. That's what's going to happen. It's time that you came clean.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I gather from this line of questioning—I hope this is not true, but notwithstanding the international praise that this bill has already garnered, and the fact that it's going to create some 50,000 jobs and is going to ensure that we can have energy conservation proceed in a very aggressive way, it would appear that the regressive Conservative Party is not standing ready to support this bill. That is unfortunate.

The point I want to make is that there's a difference between our electricity rates and our electricity bills. It's interesting that my honourable colleague talked about electricity rates in Germany, but he didn't talk about their home electricity bills. I think if he checks their home electricity bills and the way they practise energy conservation, then we'll have something that we can honestly compare between their bills and our bills.

#### ENERGY RATES

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I don't think everybody's packing up and leaving for Germany, Mr. Premier.

Nobody is buying your argument about the balance and the costs. After Ontarians are done paying for skyrocketing energy costs they won't have the money to pay for anything else, especially that refrigerator you've been telling them to buy. Just like your federal Liberal colleague Stéphane Dion, you're not being straight with Ontarians who are worried about paying their mortgages and hanging on to their jobs. Will you have the decency to lay out the real facts and tell Ontarians that, when they can least afford it, this bill is going to mean significantly

higher energy costs for homeowners and consumers in this province? Will you come straight, Mr. Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** I do want to thank the honourable member for his question and I do want to thank him as well for his comments in the Legislature yesterday, when he gave very strong evidence for the opportunity that individuals have in their own homes to impact the amount of energy that they use. I think that's what the Green Energy Act is all about: the opportunity for us to engage individually in activities that help to lessen our impact on the climate and to have the opportunity to create a green economy at the same time.

I think it is very important to note that when you make an investment, a necessary investment, as an example, in transmission capability—I spoke yesterday of a \$5-billion incremental investment—this is about an investment in a piece of infrastructure that doesn't last for just one year or two years. It's about investing in our fundamental infrastructure, which of course is paid off over a period of time. This is why we predict that the incremental costs associated with the Green Energy Act—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** We're going to hear that talking around the issue over and over and over again. But I'm going to make that point again, Mr. Premier: When people in this province are done paying for the things that they have no choice in paying—their mortgages, their food, their housing, their clothing and the electricity under this government—they're not going to have much left for anything else. They do need to know, going forward, what electricity is going to cost, not some vague thoughts about how we're going to do this or that. They need to know what the cost of electricity is going to be in the province of Ontario for consumers, for families, seniors, low-income people; people like that who can hardly afford the electricity bills they're paying now. What is it going to mean to them going forward?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** Ontarians aren't going to get very much value from the conversation if the honourable member is not able to understand that investments in infrastructure, where the infrastructure lasts 40, 50, 60 or 70 years—if he tries to pretend that it's all about paying for those in the first and second year, if he doesn't understand the fundamental investment in infrastructure, then we're going to have a challenge. The investments in Ontario's infrastructure, to build more renewable capacity by investing in transmission and distributed generation, are going to cost 1% a year incremental on Ontario's hydro bills, but what they will provide is the opportunity for 50,000 new jobs in the green economy, and it will provide for Ontarians to use less electricity as individuals. The honourable member has given strong testimony to that ability by saying that he and his family reduced their own energy use by 40%.

1040

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary?



**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Minister, it appears that the government doesn't really want people to take a good look at this bill. They want to move it ahead. That's surprising. We're looking for a better opportunity for people in the province of Ontario. That's exactly what the former Minister of Energy, currently the Minister of Finance, did with Bill 100. He sent it to committee after first reading. This bill is more complicated, more complex and broader-reaching than Bill 100.

We're asking you to follow the precedent set by your own government. Allow this bill to go out to committee after first reading so that stakeholders, consumers and, indeed, ordinary citizens across this province have a chance to comment on this bill before it goes further.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** I do apologize to the honourable member if the matter at hand has caught him off guard and it's too complex for him to be able to participate in the legislative debate, but we do think that it sends an important signal to the people in the province of Ontario—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. George Smitherman:** Mr. Speaker—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for Niagara West will withdraw his comment.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Withdrawn.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

We will be very happy this afternoon to see the opportunity for members of the Legislature to debate one of the most important matters of public policy and to debate a matter that promises 50,000 additional jobs. That will begin this afternoon. Of course, the bill will go to committee, and we look forward to all opportunities to improve upon the legislation as we've brought it forward today through the debating offers from the honourable members opposite.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** New question?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** What you've promised in a bill and what you've delivered in the past for many of your promises—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** No, it's a new question.

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** How many questions do you have?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Leader of the third party.

## CHILD PROTECTION

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** My question is for the Premier. Just a few years ago, the Premier made the following appeal for children in care in Ontario. I want to quote the Premier: "I'm asking you today on behalf of those 23,000 children—they're our kids. Their parents have either abandoned them or they're disabled or they're troubled. They might be hard to handle, but they're ours nonetheless. I'm asking you to stand up for those kids. Your minister is not doing that."

Premier, there are now almost 26,000 children in care in Ontario, and the child and youth advocate tells us that a startling 90 of these children are dying each year under the McGuinty government's watch.

My question is this: In view of the Premier's eloquence just a few years ago, how does the Premier justify his government's record when it comes to looking after some of Ontario's most vulnerable children, when 90 of them are dying each year?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I want to thank the leader of the NDP for the question, and I want to say—first of all, I want to thank the child advocate for the report. I'm glad that we created the office, and we welcome the report. Of course, we do not welcome its findings because they are troubling.

We have made some progress. There have been considerable new investments. Some 1,300 new children's aid society staff have been hired. We have put in place a new crown ward strategy, for example. But this number is troubling. We have been at about that level now since 1991. So obviously there is more to be done, and I have every confidence that our minister is on the job and will be doing everything she possibly can to help address this.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** The Premier says the government is doing everything it can. I want to quote from the child and youth advocate. This is what he had to say just a few months ago:

"In September of this year"—2008—"I met with two assistant deputy ministers and requested, among other things, a list of all the licensed group homes in the province. I still have not received that list, nor have I been able to obtain child fatality death reports or investigation reports or serious occurrence reports."

The child and youth advocate then goes on to point out that basic information he needs to do his job—your government seems to do everything it can to avoid allowing him to have access to that information. He's simply trying to protect the most vulnerable children in this province. Why is the McGuinty government stonewalling him?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, I think the honourable member and the child advocate make a pretty good point here. My understanding is that we have, subsequent to the release of this report, landed on a good information exchange arrangement. If that is still not satisfactory to the child advocate, I would like to learn of that. But I gather there was some to and fro as the child advocate, in a newly created office, began to assert himself, and there are some obligations on the part of government with respect to the release of information. I think we have an arrangement which satisfies the child advocate. Again, if we're not there, then I would ask the child advocate to speak to that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** That's not all that the child advocate had to say because the reports that I've just listed are not issues of confidentiality; they're not issues



of letting out all kinds of details about an individual. Knowing where the group homes are, knowing what the licensed group homes are, having access to investigation reports are not privacy issues, yet your government repeatedly tries to stonewall.

I want to quote something else the child advocate said: "I would say to the minister, because I know the minister and the ministry are afraid to let bad things out, that unless you let bad things out, you can't allow the good things in." That is his assessment of the McGuinty government. You would try to prevent information getting out there to the public because you're afraid it's bad information, but the child advocate says we can't improve our measures to protect these children unless this information gets out.

I ask again, why has the McGuinty government engaged in a concerted effort to stonewall the child and youth advocate?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Just so we have the full picture here, the reason that we have an independent child advocate in Ontario is because we created that office. Previous governments refused to do that. We thought that was an important thing to do, so we have done it. We have encountered, I think it's fair to say, a few bumps along the way in terms of ensuring that we are working in concert with the child advocate. We have now in place a new information-providing arrangement. If the child advocate believes we are coming up short in that regard, and if we in government are going to err, I'd rather err on the side of providing the child advocate with more information rather than less information because I'm counting on the child advocate to bring these kinds of issues to light so that governments of all political stripes on a go-forward basis can properly respond to them.

### GREEN POWER GENERATION

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I would say to the Premier, once again, your government says one thing and then does something completely different in the backroom.

My question concerns energy. New Democrats know that a strong buy-Ontario component is absolutely necessary if we are to see green energy manufacturing jobs created here in Ontario rather than in Europe or the United States, but when we look at the government's bill that was presented yesterday, we don't see a strong buy-Ontario component. In contrast, Quebec, for some time, has required 60% domestic content in all of its renewable energy projects, and it's resulted in Quebec having the only large-scale wind turbine manufacturing facility in Canada.

Can the Premier explain why the government's bill doesn't require 60% Ontario content—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you, Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** I want to thank the honourable member for taking the opportunity to ask such an

important question about the bill, and to further raise the issue of domestic content.

As I had the opportunity to say yesterday in response to his colleague, indeed, the piece of legislation does carve out the capacity to establish domestic content rules and we have every intention of doing so. As I had the opportunity to say yesterday, as we see more wind turbines coming to life in the province of Ontario, moving toward 50,000 new jobs over the next three years, it's our full and complete expectation that the steel milled by the good people of Sault Ste. Marie and Hamilton, Ontario, will be what is holding aloft the opportunity to take advantage of what Mother Nature has to offer in forms of moving toward a cleaner, greener supply of electricity in the province of Ontario. I do look forward very much to working with the honourable member further on making sure that our domestic rules produce more opportunities for jobs in the province of Ontario.

1050

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I think, in all that wordage, what really we heard is that there is no domestic content requirement in the legislation, that the McGuinty government promises there might be some in regulation.

I remember just a few years ago when the then Minister of Northern Development was promising there was going to be a wind turbine facility manufactured in Sault Ste. Marie. He got up in this Legislature every second day and said, "Oh, it's only a matter of time." Go to Sault Ste. Marie and see if there's a wind turbine manufacturing facility there.

I ask again: If you're really serious about establishing the full fledge of renewable energy manufacturing in Ontario, where is the 60% domestic content rule that we see in Quebec and that we see working in Quebec?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** If only the honourable member was using the same policy advisers that the United Steelworkers are, we'd be able to have a more effective conversation in this Legislature.

Here's a quote from Ken Neumann, the national director of the United Steelworkers union. This is from yesterday: "The Steelworkers have been vocal in our call for domestic procurement policies. So including domestic content guidelines in the Green Energy Act is a decision in the right direction."

The United Steelworkers understand that the piece of legislation introduced yesterday provides the opportunity for us to establish domestic content rules. These will be forthcoming, and they will be established on a case-by-case basis to take advantage of more opportunities for an Ontario supply chain to emerge so that, as we transform our economy towards the green economy with new jobs—50,000 over the next three years—more opportunities for Ontario workers will be found.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I want to advise the minister that it was Ken Neumann who asked me to ask this question, because he said he looked for the 60% content



rule in the legislation. It's very clear in the Quebec legislation, but it's not in the McGuinty government's legislation.

But on the other side of the coin, the McGuinty government has no problem setting a very clear target for, say, its nuclear megascheme. The McGuinty government says, "Oh, 50% of electricity will come from nuclear sources, even if it costs \$50 billion to build it." Why is it so easy for the McGuinty government to say 50% will be nuclear, but you can't even find the gumption to put a clause in the legislation requiring 60% Ontario manufacturing?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** First off, I do want to say that we look forward to the opportunity for the honourable member to stand in his place and to put on the record whether his party will be supporting a piece of legislation that substantially addresses things that they have been calling for for a long period of time. We have the opportunity, in the context of the debate here in the Legislature which begins today, to talk about these matters, and we appreciate very much that they're bringing this issue forward.

In the province of Ontario, the Green Energy Act represents an opportunity to create 50,000 new jobs over the next three years, in substantial measure because of domestic procurement opportunities, to transform the Ontario economy, and to see a more robust supply chain so that the steelworkers of Hamilton and Sault Ste. Marie have the opportunity to celebrate renewable energy by making sure that the steel that holds aloft those wind turbines has been milled in those very communities.

#### RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ENERGY CONSERVATION

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** To the Minister of Energy: Minister, this bill is not only unclear about what it's going to do, but you've been unclear in your explanation of it.

When the former Minister of Energy introduced Bill 100, he recognized its complexity and the broad reach with which it covered the province of Ontario and all stakeholders and consumers. I'm asking you again: Will you give the most important people in the province, the people who are going to be affected by this bill—not the members of this Legislature, but the people of this province and the manufacturers and the stakeholders in this province—the opportunity to speak to this bill before second reading, like your predecessor did with Bill 100?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** Now, the honourable member, because the bill is big and the bill is complex, throws up his hands and he says, "I, from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, a representative of the people am not ready to participate in a debate about an important matter at hand." We have brought this forward for this debate in the Legislature of Ontario, where the peoples' representatives reside, and as part of that process, of course, the bill will go to committee. But this afternoon,

here, representing an important piece of legislation, we'll come forward for discussion, and we see—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Ten seconds.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** We see the official opposition unable to muster a coherent policy, throwing up their hands and saying, "We don't want to participate in the debate."

The debate begins this afternoon.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Perhaps the minister needed to take a breath.

Minister, you said yourself yesterday that generation isn't going to roll out of this bill for some time. We have some time to get it right. Your predecessor did his best to get it right by giving the people of this province the opportunity to speak to the legislation. Before it gets rammed through the House on second reading within the next few days—as you've said yourself, this is the most important piece of energy legislation, perhaps, in this province's history. Does that not imply that the people who are most affected by it should have a good opportunity, a fulsome opportunity, to bring their views to bear to committee on this bill?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** In the election of October 2007, I stood before the people of Toronto Centre and said, "Elect me as your representative for the important debates that take place in the Legislature of Ontario." I was lucky enough that they did, and I joined other colleagues.

Today, we fulfill our responsibilities with a piece of legislation, and the official opposition does not stand and say, "We have issues on this point of content or that"; they stand and say, "On matters of process, we throw up our hands, and we are not ready to participate in the debate."

The debate begins this afternoon with second reading. The bill will be improved through a legislative process that will include committee hearings. We look forward to hearing on this important subject from all members, and we especially look forward to a coherent position from the official opposition.

#### EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is to the Minister of Economic Development. It appears it's another grim day in Ontario. Today we heard about Russel Metals laying off 500 workers, 16% of its workforce. Now we've even hit the media: the Hamilton Spectator, 30; the Waterloo region Record and the Guelph Mercury, 33. Abitibi-Bowater announced another shutdown of its Fort Frances mill, affecting 650 workers and their families.

Why doesn't the government have an aggressive plan to sustain jobs in our province?

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** I am looking forward to speaking with the CEO for Russel Metals. I've put a couple of calls in to him to determine exactly the facts with respect to the impact of the announcement on



Ontario. The media reports seem to suggest that there are not going to be significant job cuts in Ontario for that company at this time, which is good news, but obviously more details are needed.

I can tell you that the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities has already dispatched people to assist those workers.

I, obviously, say to the member we want to do everything we can. In representing the members of your community, I know that you'll want to work with our government to try to provide assistance where need be.

I know that that company was hit with layoffs previously in the year, and I understand as well that as a result of the contraction within that particular sector, it is a very tough time. The news out of Russel Metals, though, is—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Unfortunately, that's a bit of a sad response. Ontarians are worried about their jobs, and with all due respect, I don't believe the minister has a clue or a plan.

We've been putting ideas forward aggressively to preempt job losses, which have gone unheard: a manufacturing investment tax credit, an industrial hydro rate, a jobs protection commissioner to step in before layoffs are announced.

Why doesn't the minister have a bold plan to stop jobs from leaving our province?

1100

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** I appreciate the member's frustration here, but the government of Ontario has, over the past few years, been making literally hundreds of millions of dollars in investments, including investments in that member's community with respect to the investment to Dofasco, which leveraged very, very significant jobs in that area. Along the way, as those investments have been made—literally over \$2 billion worth of investments that have leveraged significantly larger amounts—at every step of the way, at every point where this government brought forward the funds that in fact would create more growth in the communities such as the member's, the member voted against it. We bring forward the plans, we bring forward the subsidies and the loans, the purpose of which is to generate more economic growth, the purpose of which is to create more jobs, and the member votes against them. Then he stands up and asks, "Where's the plan?" It's the plan you voted against. It's the plan that makes investments in your—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## ENERGY CONSERVATION

**Mr. Charles Sousa:** My question is for the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure. Minister, energy conservation is a priority for this government. As we move the province away from dirty, coal-fired generation, Ontario's plan depends heavily on conservation and re-

newable energy to fill the gap. This is especially important in my community of Mississauga South where, as you know, we celebrated the demolition of the Lakeview coal plant. But our community is growing, which means demand for power will grow. In order to mitigate the need for peak power generation, it is vitally important that every Ontarian do their part to conserve energy.

Yesterday, in response to your ministerial statement, the MPP from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke mentioned that his family was able to reduce their electricity use by 40% over a span of two years. My family has worked to reduce our energy consumption by using efficient light bulbs, cold water for laundry, and installing glass screens in our windows and doors. Minister, how would you encourage our members of this House to embrace a culture of conservation?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** I do think that each of us as members of the Legislature has a powerful opportunity in the speeches that we make to help to create the culture of conservation, which would be advantageous, of course, to our pocketbooks and very advantageous to the productivity overall of our society, not to mention the positive impacts on the climate. We look at jurisdictions like California, which for 30 or 40 years have shown no per capita growth in electricity use, whereas most other jurisdictions have seen more growth.

I want to encourage members to take the opportunity, in speaking to school groups, as an example, to talk about the reductions in energy use that are possible, and I think that it's been great to see champions in this Legislature: the member from Ottawa-Orléans, and yesterday the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke indicating that a 40% reduction through behavioural change in the family is a strong, strong proponent for conservation. We need to promote it by talking about it more.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Charles Sousa:** Ontarians will be looking to our government for help in making the transition to use less energy. Yesterday you introduced the Green Energy Act, which if passed would foster a culture of conservation by assisting homeowners, governments, schools, individuals and employers in using less energy and using it more efficiently. It's clear that members from both sides of the House understand the importance of conserving energy. During the debate on MPP Phil McNeely's bill on home energy audits, both sides spoke about the importance of conservation. We know it's the right thing to do.

Aside from lowering energy costs, conservation will also reduce Ontario's carbon footprint. In my riding, Jocelyn and Neil Lovell have gone above and beyond when it comes to conservation. They installed a number of energy conservation devices in their home, including solar panels on their roof. They are now off the grid. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate them again.

Minister, how would the Green Energy Act encourage Ontarians to conserve electricity?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** I think it's important that everybody have their own piece. We saw One Million



Acts of Green, which the CBC promoted, demonstrating that most people are in on the action. On the issue of the home energy audits that was mentioned, I think it's noteworthy that the Conservative election platform from 2007 said that they would call for requiring home energy audits before the sale of every house. That built on the work our colleague from Ottawa—Orléans was involved in and reflected unanimity in the Legislature of Ontario.

For my own part as Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, about 95% or 96% of the times that I've gone to the fourth-floor office, I've taken the stairs. That's reduced the use of electricity and has been helpful to my health. Tomorrow I take the message on the road over to Church Street public school, where I'm going to be talking more about the opportunities to promote energy reductions and conservation amongst grade one to six students. I'm looking forward to the opportunity to invite my colleague so he can tell his personal—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ENERGY CONSERVATION

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** My question is for the Premier. Premier, you've just heard the exchange between your Minister of Energy and Infrastructure and our critic for energy and infrastructure. I think you also know that you in government have had months and months to prepare for the introduction of this bill yesterday, whereas we in opposition only saw the bill for the first time yesterday. We haven't even had an opportunity to caucus it.

I would say to you: The question that was asked by my colleague is based on a precedent that was set by your own government, where a bill went to committee after first reading. We are asking for an opportunity for MPPs and the public to familiarize themselves with the bill. I ask you, Premier, do you think the response of your minister of the crown was—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'll tell you why I can't agree with my honourable colleagues opposite. I think we've done about as much as we can possibly do to ensure that people had a good heads-up in terms of where we're going to go on this. The bill is being posted to the Environmental Bill of Rights website for public comment. There will be committee hearings. We will fully respect the process. There will be ample opportunity for debate here and for debate during the course of committee, and we would welcome input from Ontarians.

I would be surprised—and I've already chatted with the minister about this—if there weren't one or more amendments we need to make in order to further improve the quality of the bill itself.

I must also say, time is of the essence. This economy is struggling. We want to create 50,000 new, clean, green jobs. We want to get our hands on clean electricity. We

want to do more to fight climate change. So we're moving ahead, but we'll respect the process.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Premier, what we're saying to you is, we recognize too that this is a very important bill for the public. We want to make sure that the public and the stakeholders, who obviously have a keen interest in this legislation, have the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the bill, an opportunity that you and your members have had for months and months and months. If we are to have a substantive debate on second reading, we are asking you to allow time to send it out and get the feedback from the public in order to ensure that this bill, when it is finally passed, will indeed address the concerns and be the best it possibly can be. Will you agree to send it out after first reading?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I want to say again that we intend to respect the process. There will be debate in this House. There will be committee hearings. We're going beyond that; we're posting this on the website of the Environmental Bill of Rights.

I want to remind my colleagues that many of the important elements found in our new Green Energy Act were found in their own platform in the 2007 campaign.

This is a very important piece of public policy; we agree on that. We think that time is of the essence. We need to get going with this. We need to do more to get clean electricity. We need to do more in the fight against climate change. We need to do more to create jobs for Ontario families.

We will respect the process and we'll move forward at the same time.

#### CHILD PROTECTION

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** My question is for the Premier. Premier, almost a quarter of the 90 deaths of children who died in care were in northern Ontario, although northern Ontario only represents about 7% of the population.

Commissioner Goudge reports that families who have lost children in First Nations communities never heard from the coroners about the cause of the children's deaths or the location of their children's remains, an issue that the Coroner's Act is trying to address.

Will your government commit to further changes to the legislation to ensure that the advocate for children and youth has access to the information he needs on the deaths of children in northern Ontario and in First Nations communities?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** The Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** A very, very important question was asked. I want to assure everyone in this House and I want to assure the people of Ontario that there is very, very good dialogue taking place between the Office of the Chief Coroner and the child advocate. They have met and they are certainly establishing that protocol that is very important to establish. Both have very important



tasks to perform. I have assurances that there will be that constant dialogue necessary with regard to the Goudge report and the Goudge legislation. I look forward to that process taking place and I look forward to suggestions from the office of the child advocate with regard to recommendations he may have.

1110

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** In northern Ontario there are 15 child welfare agencies and about a dozen youth justice facilities, some working in First Nations, where there is a significant shortage of children's services. The advocate for children and youth office has only had the capacity to hire one staff person to deal with all the calls for a region as vast as northern Ontario. Will the Premier commit today to additional funding so that the Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth can adequately fulfill its mandate to northern communities?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** With regard to the question as it pertains to my ministry, let me reassure the people of the province of Ontario that that dialogue between the office of the child advocate and the Office of the Chief Coroner is a healthy dialogue. It is a respectful dialogue. It will be an ongoing dialogue. We will ensure that the necessary protocols are in place so that, respecting the limitations we all have with regard to privacy regulations, that exchange of information will take place. I want to assure the people of Ontario, with regard to the Office of the Chief Coroner and the office of the child advocate, that there has been and there will continue to be excellent dialogue between the two.

## HEALTH CARE

**Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis:** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Nearly two years ago, the Toronto Star reported that this government was unable to provide Ontarians with an adequate number of bariatric surgeries, also known as gastric bypass surgeries. The paper reported that the lack of services was forcing many patients to go to the United States to receive the needed procedure. At the time the article was written, the Minister of Health's predecessor acknowledged that Ontarians had limited access to bariatric surgeries. He said, "That's not ideal and that's why we're ramping programs up."

I ask the new Minister of Health to tell this House what is being done to increase access to bariatric surgeries in Ontario. Has this government made good on its pledge to add more capacity to current bariatric programs?

**Hon. David Caplan:** I want to thank the member for Hamilton Mountain for the question. I'm very pleased to inform the House that over the next three years our government will be increasing bariatric surgery capacity in the province of Ontario by 500%. We're making it possible with a \$75-million investment that will help us to increase the number of bariatric surgeries at four centres of excellence across the province. Combined,

these centres currently provide 244 surgeries per year. By 2011-12 they should be performing 1,470 surgeries annually. Both St. Joseph's Healthcare and Hamilton Health Sciences in my honourable colleague's riding will form the hub of these centres of excellence. By increasing access to bariatric surgery, we're ensuring that more Ontarians can get this needed procedure without having to cross the border to the United States of America.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis:** This is good news for my constituents and all Ontarians. There is a significant demand for bariatric surgery across the province, so I am so glad to hear that more Ontarians have access, especially at St. Joe's in Hamilton.

Though bariatric surgery will no doubt help some Ontarians avoid the prolonged effects of some diseases, it is probably not the most appropriate medical treatment for all. I ask the Minister of Health, other than increasing access to bariatric surgery, what initiatives has this government put in place to help Ontarians fight and prevent chronic illnesses?

**Hon. David Caplan:** A very insightful question from the member opposite. As health minister, preventing and managing the spread of chronic diseases is one of the top priorities that I've identified. That's why, back in July, I launched the diabetes strategy for the province of Ontario. Our effort to expand access to bariatric surgery is just one part of a \$741-million strategy which is comprehensive in nature. The strategy includes public education—that's really key—expanded services, a registry, expansion of the insulin pump program and the expansion of chronic kidney disease services.

Every year, for example, we're giving over 1,300 adults with type 1 diabetes free insulin pumps and supplies under the new Ontario program. We're paying 100% of the price of that pump—that's \$6,300—and providing an annual grant of \$2,400 to help Ontarians with diabetes pay for supplies. We've nearly tripled diabetes funding since—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** My question is for the Premier. In November 2008, Ontario slipped into have-not status. Since then, we have lost a further 135,000 jobs. As it stands, Ontario has the lowest private sector job creation in all of Canada, but we have created more public sector jobs than all other provinces combined. This is clearly an unsustainable relationship.

Premier, you set us up for economic trouble. Do you now realize how you've squandered the good times?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** We're getting a little glimmer of the position that has secretly, and perhaps of late not so secretly, been adopted by the Conservative Party when it comes to how best to address the recession. We know they don't support our massive investments in infrastructure: our new schools, new hospitals, new roads



and new bridges, public transit and the thousands and thousands of jobs. We know they don't support the massive investments we've made in education and all those young people getting more opportunities to pursue higher skills and education. We know they don't support those things.

What they really support is cuts. That's what they support. They want fewer nurses. They want fewer teachers. They want fewer water inspectors. They want fewer protections for the people of Ontario. They want fewer reliable public services for Ontario families. I'm glad to see they're now taking it out from under the table and putting it on top of the table. Their response to the recession: cut services to families.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** Same old same old. In 2003, you inherited a strong, vibrant economy, like a baseball pitcher coming into a baseball game with a big lead, but you've blown the lead with stifling taxes and burdensome red tape. In the five years of a booming economy, your government has created as many private sector jobs as our PC government did in one year. The PC government created more than one million new jobs. We averaged 135,000 new private sector jobs per year, the same number that you've lost in the last three months. On top of all that, we in Ontario have to bear the blame of being a have-not province. Premier, how can you boast about your accomplishments when all the figures point to failure?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, just so we're clear, they don't support our investments in infrastructure and the thousands of jobs that creates. They don't support our investments in skills and education and the new opportunities that creates for our young people. They don't support our \$1 billion invested so far into over 1,000 research and commercialization projects to create the jobs of the future. I'm surprised that they don't support our cuts to business taxes, growing to \$3 billion, and they don't support our partnerships with businesses, which have landed over \$8 billion in investments and 9,000 jobs.

With respect to our public servants, we have the fewest civil servants per capita in the country. Notwithstanding that, their answer—once again, for Ontarians to hear loudly and clearly—to the recession: cut public services; cut public services. We're not going to go there. If you want to talk about a one-trick pony, you'll see it; it's that side of the House.

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Last night at a rally in Hamilton, more than 700 health care workers and their supporters raised serious concerns about the state of the health care cuts. Underfunding by this government has caused health care cuts in Hamilton, resulting in the loss of 400 nursing and hospital jobs, speech and language services, the Baby's Best Start program, rehab beds and \$21 million from Hamilton Health Sciences.

1120

In Hamilton yesterday, the minister was quoted as saying that the government has increased hospital funding by 32% since 2003. If that's the case, why are these cuts happening? And why are Hamilton hospitals carrying million-dollar deficits? You're sending mixed messages, Minister.

**Hon. David Caplan:** The only mixed message is coming from the member opposite. Hospital funding has increased 32% over the course of five years. That's in stark contrast from what we've seen under both previous governments. In fact, we've seen under the NDP government 3,000 nurses fired in the province of Ontario, and over 6,000 fired by Conservatives. Over 10,000 nurses have been hired by the province of Ontario since 2003, and I'm very proud of that fact.

We've seen other wonderful advances: the innovation of family health teams, nurse-practitioner-led clinics. We've seen a \$1.1-billion aging-at-home strategy. I think this member needs to get his facts correct. Health care spending has increased and that's only going to continue in the province. I know that health care now accounts for 46 cents out of every program dollar spent in Ontario, and that is only going to increase.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** That's an amazing comment. We've already lost our emergency room. In addition to that loss and these devastating cuts, funding for 70 transitional beds is running out. Housekeeping and food services are threatened with contracting out. Our fertility clinic is being privatized, and we all know that privatization of any health care costs means more money. When will this minister and the government wake up to the health care funding crisis and properly fund Hamilton hospitals and the health care system in this province and stop quoting numbers that don't apply to areas?

**Hon. David Caplan:** A little truth in advertising: It was the NDP government that delisted fertility services in the province of Ontario. So if you have any problems, I say to the member opposite, talk to Hampton, Kormos and Marchese, who were all a part of that government which did so.

But based upon data from Statistics Canada's labour force survey, employment in Ontario's hospitals increased from 177,300 people in 2003, to 208,400 in 2008, producing a gain of 31,100 jobs. That represents an increase of approximately 7%.

I would encourage the member to get in touch with the reality as opposed to his ideological rhetoric and look at the true facts and the true state of health care in the province of Ontario. Unfortunately, my friend opposite is oblivious and out of touch with—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### NORTHERN ONTARIO DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. David Oraziotti:** My question is for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines regarding the growth plan for northern Ontario. As a representative



from northern Ontario, I understand the importance of creating a long-term strategic plan that will strengthen and enhance our government's commitment to improving the northern economy. While our government continues to make unprecedented investments in green energy projects and the traditional resource sector, as well as in health care, education and infrastructure renewal, we recognize there's more to be done. That's why we're working on a plan to be developed by northerners for northerners.

Last spring, residents from the region were invited to provide input on the discussion paper released by your ministry. In May, I had the privilege of hosting the consultation session focused on the discussion paper in Sault Ste. Marie, which included community leaders and representatives from business, industry, research and the academic sectors. Minister, could you please elaborate on the consultation process for the northern Ontario growth plan that is taking place across the province?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I'm very grateful for the question from the hard-working member from Sault Ste. Marie. Certainly, the growth plan process has been going very well, and I'm pleased to tell members of the Legislature more about it. From November 2008 until even this month, February, my ministry and the Ontario Growth Secretariat held 13 technical sessions all across the north. The focus of these sessions has included health, transportation, alternative energy, mining, education and training, value-added forestry, bioeconomy, agriculture, tourism, aboriginal economic development and business. In addition, from some of the feedback we've received, we've added two sessions on the rural economy, very important ones, one plan for the northeast and one for the northwest. The fact is, these one-day facilitated workshops have been a very positive experience. They've provided an opportunity for participants to discuss the key policy directives with growth planning. And I want to talk about the Think North Summit, but I will perhaps talk about that in my supplementary.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. David Oraziotti:** I think all northerners would agree a growth plan for this region is very important. Northern Ontario faces many unique opportunities and challenges during both favourable and difficult economic times, and it's good to see that during this current period of uncertainty, our government is working with northerners to create a more prosperous future for the region.

Minister, the technical sessions will provide the government with valuable ideas for the growth plan, while the Think North Summit is also proving to be a valuable tool for the region in drafting this plan. I understand from those who attended, including Sault Ste. Marie's mayor, John Rowsell, that feedback was very positive, but could you provide further information for the House on this important conference?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** Thank you again to the member from Sault Ste. Marie. Indeed, the Think North Summit, which was held in Thunder Bay earlier in the month, was an extremely positive experience and very

much a real success. In fact, people were describing it as inspiring, and I found it that way myself.

The purpose of Think North was to broaden our thinking and to inspire the way that we approach issues by bringing together participants with national and international leaders, who were remarkable, along with myself and my co-chair of the northern growth plan, Minister Smitherman. We also had Minister Cansfield and Minister Duguid, who were there attending the summit, so it was wonderful to have that support. As well, there were over 400 northerners participating, which included large urban mayors, rural mayors, First Nations leadership, industry and business representatives, representation from all major educational institutions, research networks and NGOs. We believe the summit will build on input received through these regional sessions and the technical tables to shape the draft growth plan. We look forward to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### CHILD PROTECTION

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Yesterday, you told this House that the number of deaths of children in care has remained constant since 1991. Minister, you also told us that you have increased the number of children's aid staff by 20% since you took office. Will you tell us how it is that the number of staff can increase, yet the number of deaths does not decline at all?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I welcome the opportunity to actually clarify some of the misinformation that is out there surrounding the number of 90. I think it's important that the members of this Legislature take their leadership roles seriously and actually refer to the facts. The fact of the matter is that only 14 of the 90 children—and I stress that every death is a tragedy—were actually in the care of children's aid societies at the time of their deaths.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** Minister, that was the information you gave us yesterday that I've used in my question to you, and I think that the important thing here is the fact that there should be no more important goal for you and your ministry than the lives and the health of our children. Clearly, regardless of the comment that you make today about the description of the category of these deaths, you are not meeting this goal. So I'm asking you today to commit to studying why the number of children dying in care is what it is, and report back to this House with your findings.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I can assure the member opposite that there is nothing more important than the protection of children in this province, especially the children who are under the protection of the children's aid societies. Those are our children and it is our responsibility to keep them safe. That is why we review the reports from the coroner every time there is a death. We follow up with recommendations every time. Again, I would refer you to the coroner's report to see the details



of what we have done. The coroner himself does acknowledge the work that we have done to reduce the number of deaths.

I think it's important to take this opportunity to talk about the deaths due to unsafe sleeping arrangements of infants. It is a big problem, not just among kids who are—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## HOSPITAL SECURITY

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. CBC broke a story about an assault occurring at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto. A husband and wife claim to have been assaulted by security guards at the hospital. The man received three broken ribs and a punctured lung from the beating and had to spend three days in a different hospital. A nurse working with Toronto homeless people came forward claiming another brutal assault on a homeless man by hospital staff at St. Michael's. These are troubling allegations.

The minister was at St. Michael's Hospital last week. Can the minister share with this House how he addressed the beatings while at St. Michael's last week?

**Hon. David Caplan:** In fact, I was at St. Michael's Hospital last week to talk about setting standards for emergency department wait times and rolling out the next phase in our strategy.

I am familiar, at least cursorily, with the issue the member raises. The member should know that it is the subject of a police investigation. The member well knows that I am not in a position to be able to comment on matters that are the subject of a police investigation.

I can tell you that the hospital is fully co-operating with the police and has dealt with the security officials who were involved in the particular incident.

These are incredibly regrettable events. I do trust that our police have the proper ability, the skill, the knowledge and the tools at their disposal to properly address the issues that are in front of them. I know that—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Well, it feels like this issue is not on the minister's radar. If the minister took those beatings of aboriginal people in a hospital seriously, he would have raised those issues while he was at St. Michael's last week. The minister had a chance to tell the administration that these actions are unacceptable. By ignoring those troubling incidents when he had a chance to raise them, the minister sends a loud message. His silence is sending a loud message.

Will the minister guarantee in this House today that these kinds of incidents will stop at St. Michael's and in all other hospitals in Ontario?

**Hon. David Caplan:** I completely reject the premise of the member's question. She knows that I'm unable to comment on a matter subject to a police investigation;

her suggestion otherwise is perhaps some of the lowest political commentary we've seen in this House in a great long time.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The time for question period has ended.

There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1132 to 1500.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I am rising today in absolute disappointment about the disgrace called the MRI wait times in the city of Ottawa at the Ottawa Hospital. I want to know from the Premier and the health minister: Why does the Ottawa Hospital have the longest wait list for MRIs in this province? Ninety per cent of the people on that wait list are waiting for 360 days. That is almost a year. It is 12 times more than the provincial target, which is only 28 days. It is a disgrace.

Dr. Cushman, the chair of our local LHIN, told the Ottawa Sun and other media outlets that we need more MRIs in the city of Ottawa and we need to streamline hospital waiting lists. I want to know again: What is the Minister of Health going to do about this province-wide, nationwide embarrassment, and how is the minister going to ensure that those suffering are not going to have to wait one full year for an MRI because of this government's failure?

Yesterday the MPP from Ottawa Centre brought up concerns about ER wait times, and he said that his "constituents are no doubt concerned." I can tell you something: In response to that question, the Minister of Health did not respond to what I would call a near-crisis level on waiting for an MRI. I'm not the only person in this chamber who has seen a loved one suffer from a terminal illness. Sometimes people do not have 360 days to wait for an MRI.

### RIDING OF PETERBOROUGH

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I rise today to talk about something that is very near and dear to my heart: my riding of Peterborough. I was born and raised in Peterborough and have witnessed first-hand what a great community it is and what it has to offer.

With the Trent-Severn waterway running through its core, we boast one of the most picturesque landscapes in this province. Our new state-of-the-art hospital, funded through this government, is a pride and a welcomed addition to our community and the surrounding area it serves. Our schools offer youth in Peterborough every opportunity to be educated through modern technology and skilled teachers. We have a strong arts and cultural community and, of course, the world-famous Peterborough Petes hockey team. The businesses of Peterborough are owned and operated by award-winning men

and women. They promote local products within our area and around the world.

I invite all of my esteemed colleagues and their staff to join MPP Lou Rinaldi and me at our Peterborough-Northumberland-Quinte West Day at Queen's Park this Wednesday, February 25, from 2:30 to 6:30 pm. You'll be given the opportunity to speak to members of our business community and environmental organizations and our health care professionals and sample their excellent products.

I look forward to seeing all of you on Wednesday in committee rooms 228 and 230 for Peterborough-Northumberland-Quinte West Day.

### TOURISM

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Yesterday was Tourism Day here in the Legislature. I want to thank all the representatives of Ontario's tourism industry who came to share their ideas and concerns, and I hope the government is listening.

Two hundred thousand Ontario jobs are dependent on a strong and vibrant tourism industry. This is a \$22-billion industry. Its importance must be acknowledged and never underestimated. I wish the Minister of Tourism had announced something of substance yesterday, for, despite our many strengths, tourism has been affected in this time of extreme economic challenge. That's why it's so important that the government actually follow through on the advice it has received from the industry. Surely, the time for study is over and the time for action is now.

The government has been told repeatedly about the industry's immediate need for access to capital. Many operators need a line of credit in order to meet their payroll and invest in their properties and attractions. The government cannot ignore this need.

But through our hard work and ingenuity, I believe Ontario's future remains bright. I think of my riding of Wellington-Halton Hills. Through our popular festivals, our arts and culture, our scenic beauty, and our many restaurants, shops, hotels and B&Bs, we have so much to offer visitors and travellers.

The Ontario tourism industry is making great strides forward. They are planning, they are innovating, they are creating and sustaining jobs and they are showcasing the very best that our great province has to offer.

### HILLSIDE FESTIVAL

**Mrs. Liz Sanders:** This is a wonderful follow-up to the member from Wellington-Halton Hills because I'm pleased to rise today to discuss tourism in my riding of Guelph.

The Hillside Festival, held outside every July at Guelph Lake, is one of Canada's great summer music experiences and has been a part of the Guelph community for over 20 years. Last year, with assistance from the Ministry of Tourism's Celebrate Ontario program, Hillside built on the great success of the annual July event by expanding their Hillside programming and

launched a winter version of the festival called Hillside Inside.

On February 7, I had the pleasure of attending the second annual Hillside Inside at the Sleeman Centre in downtown Guelph. The full-day, 10-hour music marathon event saw 11 performers, including local talent, as well as food and local craft vendors. The summer Hillside event attracts about 6,000 people to Guelph. The ability to build on that success with Hillside Inside during the winter is a brilliant opportunity to boost tourism all year round.

In addition to the Hillside events, the internationally renowned Guelph Jazz Festival has also benefited from the Ontario government's tourism grants in support of various festivals, events and attractions.

I'm delighted to invite everyone here to Hillside, Hillside Inside and the Guelph Jazz Festival.

### SUDBURY JAIL

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** On January 20 I toured the 80-year-old Sudbury jail, and I want to share with this House what I saw.

First off, the medical area: It was crammed with an old examination table and old medical instruments. It looked like a throwback in time; I couldn't believe it. The meds room had tiles missing; the rest of them were water-stained.

Then, the staff washroom. Picture this: three feet by five feet; the sink is rusted; the tap leaks; the vanity, or what's left of it, is completely rotten. The whole thing is disgusting.

The staff lunch room was no better. It has no ceiling because the roof has been leaking for the last seven years, and the counter was half missing.

The locker room had nothing but a bare light bulb on the ceiling. It was in need of a coat of paint and an air exchanger, let me tell you.

The whole place is old, musty, decrepit and demoralizing. I was shocked that the employees-only area is actually worse off than the cells area.

The job of a correctional officer is very stressful. If you're not at the top of your game, there is no way you can put in a full shift there. We need to give the staff at the jail opportunities to lessen their stress, take a break, use the washroom or make a cup of coffee in a clean, normal, non-stressful environment.

The minister in charge has been invited to tour the Sudbury jail; it is in his own riding. I urge him to do so. He treats his employees with respect and dignity? Well, the jail staff are his employees. They deserve respect and dignity also.

### WASTE DISPOSAL

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I rise today to inform you about an exciting accomplishment. Ontario's largest PCB storage site, which contains 78,000 tonnes of contaminated soil, is being cleaned up in my riding of London-



Fanshawe. PCBs are chemicals used as electronics lubricant; they were banned in 1977.

In the mid-1980s, PCB contamination found on several industrial properties and in Pottersburg Creek was cleaned up. Since then, the contamination waste has been safely and securely stored in the Pottersburg storage site. We now have the technology to safely destroy PCBs, and we are doing so in Quebec.

When I attended a public forum last Thursday at Fanshawe College, the company selected for the safe removal of the contamination waste informed local residents of the details of the project and how it will ensure the safety of the community. This storage site in London–Fanshawe will finally be rid of PCB waste in December.

I would like to recognize the Minister of the Environment for committing the \$63.5 million for this project and for effectively engaging and informing our community as it ensures that the project is completed.

1510

#### RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ENERGY CONSERVATION

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I rise to bring up the issue of the Green Energy Act, Bill 150, which is scheduled to be debated this afternoon.

I ask the government—they have their last opportunity to do the right thing, which is to send the bill out after first reading to committee hearings to get public input. I say that because this is a complicated bill. It's making changes to many different acts.

The bill was just given to the opposition yesterday. Today is the first scheduled day of debate, and it's scheduled for pretty much every day this week. It's obvious from the e-mails we're receiving already that there are many concerns out there. I think the quality of the debate in second reading could be very much improved if the government took the time to let those interested stakeholders come before a committee and make their concerns known.

We already know that they're talking about a cost of some \$5 billion, and there are 4.2 million electricity customers, so that works out to about \$1,200 per customer. Certainly, we have questions to do with costs. We have questions about the mandatory energy audit, some \$300 per customer. Why not make it voluntary? That would seem to me to make more sense.

So I just say to the government, use your opportunity coming up in just a few minutes and send this bill to committee. The quality of the debate and the quality of the bill will be greatly improved if you do that.

HAZEL McCALLION

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** On Saturday, February 14, Mississauga Mayor Hazel McCallion celebrated her 88th birthday.

*Applause.*

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** Thank you.

Mayor McCallion has served the city of Mississauga for almost a third of her life. During this time, the residents of Mississauga have seen their city grow into a booming metropolitan—Canada's sixth-largest—debt-free city. Even more impressive is that she has an approval rating of over 90%, which any member of this House can envy.

Serving in her 11th term, Mayor McCallion is a great role model and is an example to women all over Canada. She's a living example that with a positive attitude, drive and a strong will, one can accomplish anything at any age.

On behalf of the constituents of Mississauga–Brampton South, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mayor McCallion for her many years of service and wish her a very happy birthday.

#### HUMBER VALLEY SHARKS

**Ms. Laurel C. Broten:** We all know the important role that sport plays, not only in a healthier lifestyle but also in building a stronger community. The lessons taught through sport mean our youth learn the importance of good sportsmanship, as well as being active.

It is for this reason that I'm so happy to rise today to congratulate the Humber Valley Sharks minor peewee A team in my riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore for having been selected as a Future Team Canada. This prestigious honour, bestowed on 13 teams from across Canada by Hockey Canada and the Wayne Gretzky Foundation, is awarded to the teams that show the best spirit of the game.

This year's selection of the Humber Valley Sharks was due in no small part to their efforts in supporting a local inner-city school. Indeed, while other teams were raising money to ensure that they could have better equipment and more ice time, the Humber Valley Sharks were organizing a used-equipment drive, where the players collected lightly used equipment to help others enjoy the game that they love.

My riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore is a vibrant, close-knit community, and it's actions like those of the Humber Valley Sharks that make it such an honour to represent.

The Future Team Canada program recognizes teams that realize the true value of sport, and there is no team more deserving of that recognition than Etobicoke–Lakeshore's own Humber Valley Sharks. Congratulations to the Sharks.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### ZERO TOLERANCE TO VIOLENCE ON PUBLIC TRANSIT ACT, 2009

##### LOI DE 2009 SUR LA TOLÉRANCE ZÉRO À L'ÉGARD DE LA VIOLENCE DANS LES TRANSPORTS EN COMMUN

Mr. Colle moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 151, An Act to enhance public safety on public transit systems in Ontario / Projet de loi 151, Loi visant à améliorer la sécurité publique au sein des réseaux de transport en commun en Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** The short title of the bill is the Zero Tolerance to Violence on Public Transit Act. The bill makes it an offence to threaten, endanger, assault or otherwise harm any person, including passengers and transit system operators and other employees, on property that is part of a public transit system in Ontario. A maximum fine of \$50,000 or a term of imprisonment of two years less a day, or both, is provided where there is a conviction.

I hope that this bill will receive good consideration. We need a safe public transit system in Toronto and all across Ontario.

## MOTIONS

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), the requirement for notice be waived with respect to ballot items 68, 70, 71 and 72.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

### SELECT COMMITTEE ON MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice to appoint a committee and to report its observations and recommendations to the House.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is there consent? Agreed.

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** This is rather lengthy, so if members would indulge me.

I move that a Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions be appointed to consider and report to the House its observations and recommendations with respect to a comprehensive Ontario mental health and addictions strategy. In developing such recommendations, the committee will:

—work with consumers/survivors, providers, experts and other interested parties to determine the needs that currently exist in the province

—consider the mental health and addiction needs of children and young adults

—consider the mental health and addiction needs of First Nations (on- and off-reserve), Inuit and Metis peoples

—consider the mental health needs and addiction needs of seniors

—identify ways to leverage existing opportunities and initiatives within the current mental health and addictions system

—explore innovative approaches to service delivery in the community

—identify opportunities to improve coordination and integration across the sectors for all people including those with concurrent mental health and addiction problems

—recognize the importance of early intervention and health promotion with respect to diagnosing and treating mental health and addictions issues

—consider the mental health and addiction needs of francophone and ethnic minorities facing linguistic and cultural gaps

—examine access to care issues for persons with mental health and addictions issues including primary and emergency care

—examine the existing continuum of social services and support for those with mental health and addictions issues. This would include justice, supportive housing, education and vocational support.

That the committee may present or, if the House is not sitting, may release by depositing with the Clerk of the House, interim reports; and

That the committee shall present or, if the House is not sitting, shall release by depositing with the Clerk of the House, its final report to the assembly by the end of the spring 2010 sitting period as prescribed in standing order 6(a)(i), except that if the committee determines more time is required it may, by motion, extend this deadline by no more than three months.

1520

That the committee have authority to meet at the call of the Chair, to call for persons, papers and things, to employ counsel and staff and, as the committee deems relevant to its terms of reference, to commission reports and adjourn from place to place, subject to the normal budget approval from the Board of Internal Economy; and

That in the event of and notwithstanding any prorogation of the House before the presentation of the committee's final report, the committee shall be deemed to be continued to the subsequent session or sessions and may continue to meet during any such prorogation; and

That the committee may examine any other matter it deems relevant to its terms of reference; and

That the committee be composed of the following members, representing six from the government, two from the official opposition and one from the third party:

Mr. Flynn (Chair), Mrs. Elliott (Vice-Chair), Mr. Balkissoon, Mrs. Van Bommel, Mr. Leal, Mrs. Sandals, Ms. Jaczek, Ms. Jones and M<sup>me</sup>. Gélinas.



**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Mr. Phillips has moved that a Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions be appointed to consider and report to the House its observations and recommendations with respect to a comprehensive Ontario mental health and addictions strategy. In developing such recommendations, the committee will:

—work with consumers/survivors—

**Interjection:** Dispense.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Dispense? Dispense.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), the requirement for notice be waived with respect to ballot item 74.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

## PETITIONS

### MULTIPLE MYELOMA

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Health Canada has approved the use of Revlimid for patients with multiple myeloma, an incurable form of cancer; and

"Whereas Revlimid is a vital new treatment that must be accessible to all patients in Ontario for this life-threatening cancer of the blood cells; and

"Whereas multiple myeloma is treatable with the proper therapies, thereby giving hope to the 2,000 Canadians diagnosed annually;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Immediately provide Revlimid as a choice for patients with multiple myeloma and their health care providers in Ontario through public funding."

I want to give it to page Alexander.

### WORKPLACE INSURANCE

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I have a petition to do with Bill 119. It reads:

"Whereas the McGuinty government has introduced Bill 119, Workplace Safety and Insurance Amendment Act, 2008, which makes WSIB mandatory for independ-

ent operators, partners and executive officers in construction; and

"Whereas this bill will cost the average business owner about \$11,000 while doing nothing to catch cheaters in the underground economy; and

"Whereas this bill will do nothing to make workers safer in the workplace; and

"Whereas there has been insufficient consultation with construction companies and stakeholders to discuss the impact of this bill or other alternatives; and

"Whereas the McGuinty government refuses to allow discussion of this bill with the affected parties through the committee process;

"Now therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To revoke Bill 119 or to require the Standing Committee on Social Policy to travel across the province of Ontario in order to provide an opportunity for consultation with affected businesses."

I support this petition.

### MULTIPLE MYELOMA

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Health Canada has approved the use of Revlimid for patients with multiple myeloma, an incurable form of cancer; and

"Whereas Revlimid is a vital new treatment that must be accessible to all patients in Ontario for this life-threatening cancer of the blood cells; and

"Whereas multiple myeloma is treatable with the proper therapies, thereby giving hope to the 2,000 Canadians diagnosed annually;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Immediately provide Revlimid as a choice for patients with multiple myeloma and their health care providers in Ontario through public funding."

As I support this petition I will be signing it and sending it with page Xiao.

### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I have a petition entitled Stop the Violence on Public Transit.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas too many innocent people are being victimized by acts of violence while using public transit;

"Whereas too many public transit employees are being victimized by acts of violence while working to serve the public;

"Whereas we need to send a strong message of zero tolerance for violence on public transit;

"Whereas anyone harming or carrying a weapon on public transit should be dealt with by the full force of the law;

"Whereas public transit riders and workers have the right to ride and work on public transit free of violence, intimidation and harm;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to put an end to violence on public transit and totally support MPP Mike Colle's private member's bill to crack down on violence on public transit."

I fully support that petition and affix my name to it.

### CHILD CUSTODY

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I have a petition from a number of residents in my riding and it reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the people of Ontario, deserve and have the right to request an amendment to the Children's Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their parents and grandparents.

"Whereas subsection 20(2.1) requires parents and others with custody of children to refrain from unreasonably placing obstacles to personal relations between the children and their grandparents; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2) contains a list of matters that a court must consider when determining the best interests of a child. The bill amends that subsection to include a specific reference to the importance of maintaining emotional ties between children and grandparents; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2.1) requires a court that is considering custody of or access to a child to give effect to the principle that a child should have as much contact with each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2.2) requires a court that is considering custody of a child to take into consideration each applicant's willingness to facilitate as much contact between the child and each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child;

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Children's Law Reform Act as above to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their parents and grandparents."

As I support this, I shall sign it and send it to the Clerk's table.

### BATHURST HEIGHTS ADULT LEARNING CENTRE

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I've got a petition from the students at the Bathurst Heights Adult Learning Centre.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there are over 2,000 adult ESL students being served by the Bathurst Heights Adult Learning Centre, operated by the Toronto District School Board...;

"Whereas this is the only ... ESL learning centre in this area ... located directly on the ... subway...;

"Whereas newcomers in Toronto, and in the Lawrence Heights area, need the Bathurst Heights Adult Learning Centre...;

"Whereas the proposed revitalization of Lawrence Heights threatens the existence of the centre;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, demand that any revitalization of Lawrence Heights include a newcomer centre and ensure that the Bathurst Heights centre continues to exist in the present location."

I support the petition and affix my name to it.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### GREEN ENERGY AND GREEN ECONOMY ACT, 2009

#### LOI DE 2009 SUR L'ÉNERGIE VERTE ET L'ÉCONOMIE VERTE

Mr. Smitherman moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 150, An Act to enact the Green Energy Act, 2009 and to build a green economy, to repeal the Energy Conservation Leadership Act, 2006 and the Energy Efficiency Act and to amend other statutes / Projet de loi 150, Loi édictant la Loi de 2009 sur l'énergie verte et visant à développer une économie verte, abrogeant la Loi de 2006 sur le leadership en matière de conservation de l'énergie et la Loi sur le rendement énergétique et modifiant d'autres lois.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Debate?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** It is for me a great privilege to stand in this House and to have an opportunity to move forward this debate and, more importantly, to move forward this issue on behalf of the good people of the province of Ontario. We have an opportunity here, motivated by our desire to help the climate and to get more jobs for Ontarians, to move forward with a comprehensive, bold and ambitious package of reforms that will at once create an environment here in our province that allows more renewable energy to come to life, and to create a culture of conservation in our province.

1530

On the renewable side, we will: adopt an attractive feed-in tariff regime, a pricing system for renewable energy that will guarantee rates and help spark new investment in renewable energy and generation, and increase investor confidence and provide them with certainty; establish the right to connect to the electricity grid for renewable projects and establish a streamlined approvals process, including providing service guarantees for renewable energy projects; and, in my own ministry, to make sure this comes to life, a renewable energy facilitator who will assist in making all of this happen.

We've seen great opportunities, even in the short number of hours since this bill was first introduced, to



see a culture of conservation and a discussion about conservation emerging. We want to be a North American leader on energy efficiency standards for household appliances, including the efficient use of energy.

At the beginning, I was to say that I'll be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistants, the member from Etobicoke-Lakeshore and the member for Ottawa-Orléans. My apologies.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Not a problem.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** Thank you.

The issue of conservation is an issue that has already been hotly debated, and which is an amazingly powerful debate unto itself about mandatory home energy audits prior to the sale of homes, making energy efficiency a central tenet of the Ontario building code. In greening the Ontario government buildings and broader public sector buildings, we have opportunities to demonstrate our own leadership, and this is what this act is all about. I'm very excited to have the privilege of doing so, especially for the promise that it offers at a time when "economic crisis" are the watchwords of the day. This is about an opportunity to harness the capacity that Mother Nature provides to us and, at the same time, to offer new job opportunities for 50,000 people in Ontario over the next three years.

Over the course of this debate, we will have an opportunity to demonstrate more how people ranging from architects to truck drivers, manufacturers and engineers, will have the opportunity for additional employment. But I want to talk a little bit about some of the regional focus associated with economic opportunities.

Economic opportunities for northern Ontario: As one example in northeastern Ontario, indeed in northwestern Ontario as well, there is a tremendous array of renewable energy and of opportunities for economic benefits for folks, including aboriginals and First Nations communities. But at the moment, transmission limitations mean that we can't get any additional power south of Sudbury. We'll seek to address that by making important early investments in additional transmission. This opens the door for investment in renewable energy.

We see opportunities in our rural communities for farmers, not just to lease their land for big companies that are the proponents of wind farms, but indeed for clusters of farmers to see themselves as investors in projects.

When I travelled to Denmark, I had the opportunity to witness a mindset of co-operatives. In one municipality, 8,000 people lived in the municipality and more than 800 of them were investors in one renewable energy project. When more people in local communities have the opportunity to make investments and to derive benefits, they are much more likely to want to support and embrace the opportunities that this bill is going to offer.

We see opportunities, people knocking on the door in urban areas and saying, "How can we participate in the emergence of more green energy in our jurisdictions, in our local neighbourhoods?" As a representative of an urban area, I want to see the rooftops of my riding come to life in a fashion that, instead of reflecting the sun,

which is unhelpful, sees them used to harness the sun. I want to see our mindset with respect to our energy system in the province of Ontario emerge from the one-way street, where our mindset is that we have big plants that develop energy and the energy flows down through wires to homes and to businesses. Instead, we want those very homes and businesses and the roofs of schools, too, to emerge as new parts of microgeneration. All across the landscape, we have the opportunity to unlock thousands and thousands of new investors, people who are motivated by the twin desires, on the one hand, to make a difference for the climate, and on the other, to make a difference in the economic texture of their communities, to put bread on the table for their families. That is the opportunity that is presented in this piece of legislation, which I think has been described today as a bold piece of legislation.

Earlier today, instead of discussions about content, we've seen one party in this Legislature resort to discussions about process. Let me just detail the way the process is going to unfold.

Over the course of the coming weeks, the detailed provisions of the Green Energy Act will be subjected to, I'm sure, a great debate here and a review by a committee of the Legislature. We look forward to hearing from colleagues. As I have said, and as the Premier has said, we look forward to the opportunity to gain insights that will allow us to strengthen our bill.

The bill, as of today, will be posted on the Environmental Bill of Rights for 30 days for public comment, and we encourage people to look for such opportunities to do so.

I really did find some of the opposition critiques to be a little bit inconsistent.

On February 17, as we returned to this Legislature, the member for Niagara West-Glanbrook said, "I say to the minister, it is time for action." Later on, he said, "Minister, at this time of economic crisis, Ontario needs a strong leader in the Premier's office. Enough of his musings: It's time for action." On February 23, the same member from Niagara West-Glanbrook said, "When are we going to see some action to revive our economy?"

And today, in response to the introduction of a piece of legislation by our government, we had cries of protest from the opposition, with people saying that they weren't ready for the debate, that the comprehensive nature of the bill, its boldness, was so challenging.

I really want to say to the opposition party, when you stand and lead questions day after day and you say, "We demand action," and then, when a government stands up with a set of initiatives that are bold, you say, "Oh, we're not ready for such action"—we are elected members of the Legislature, sent here by our constituents to participate in the most timely matters of public discussion. What more timely matter of public discussion could we find than the desire, on the one hand, to impact the climate positively and, on the other, to impact the economic circumstances for our families?

We had the official opposition in the province of Ontario today throwing up their arms and saying, "No,



we're not ready for such a discussion. Let's put it out to the people, because we're elected representatives of the people, but we cannot get our heads wrapped around it."

Instead, we say, as a government, this is an important initiative, reflected by the fact that it's called today for second reading, and we will be working to have a good debate in this place and to seek to learn things about how we can improve our bill through the legislative process.

One of the initiatives that has been addressed in this Legislature, even in the short time since the bill was introduced, is the issue of domestic content.

I want to refer people to schedule B, subsection 25.35(2) of the proposed legislation, under "Minister's Directives." It says:

"The minister may issue, and the OPA shall follow in preparing its feed-in tariff program, directives that set out the goals to be achieved during the period to be covered by the program, including goals relating to,

"(a) the participation by aboriginal peoples in the development and establishment of renewable energy projects."

We see an opportunity for First Nations communities to be in on the ground floor of projects, to have resources contributed to the development of such projects and to find opportunities for First Nations to reap some of the financial rewards.

The directives also say, "(b) the involvement of members of the local community in the development and establishment of renewable energy projects."

We see opportunities all across the landscape for local communities, not just to be host to such projects, but, as I spoke of regarding Denmark, we see opportunities for people to be investors in such projects.

And under minister's directive (c), including goals relating to domestic content, I've been clear in this House to say that Ontario will be moving forward to establish domestic content rules that will ensure that as new wind turbines come to life in the province of Ontario, the steelmakers of Sault Ste. Marie and Hamilton will have the opportunity to feel a sense of pride that the work they have done through their hands and through their efforts is holding aloft wind turbines that are harnessing what Mother Nature has to offer. These are the opportunities that are presented in this bill.

We heard the member from Burlington today comparing this piece of legislation to the War Measures Act. This is what the opposition has resorted to: the images of the War Measures Act. Language contained in the bill, that has been adopted from a Conservative bill introduced in 2002, is there to ensure compliance on mandatory matters. I say to the member from Burlington, take a good, hard look at the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act, 2002. She will see the origins of the language that she, today, compared to the War Measures Act.

We've seen an extraordinary capitulation in the last 24 hours on the part of the opposition critic on the matter of his commitment and his party's commitment to renewable energy. Yesterday in the Legislature, the honourable member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke stood up

and said in response to my minister's statement, "There's no question that conservation is important. No watt, no kilowatt, no megawatt, should ever be wasted. I can tell the minister, and I've told his predecessor, that several years ago my wife and I, along with our children, embarked on a program to conserve energy in our own home. We reduced our usage in our home by 40%.... I think that is an important thing, and I think there are some gains to be made out there today in that part of this act."

1540

That was yesterday, and that's a long time ago in the history of policy-making on the part of the official opposition, because earlier today the same member, the opposition critic for energy from the riding of Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, had capitulated entirely, not only on the statement he made yesterday but on the very campaign platform upon which he ran and was elected.

The 2007 Conservative election platform: "Requiring home energy audits before every sale of a house so that the market will reward homes which are energy efficient. This will be a signal to homeowners that they will get a return on energy investments in their homes." And by today, in a media scrum not 50 feet from where I stand right now, the honourable member, the energy critic for the official opposition, said no longer does the Conservative Party stand in favour of something that was unanimously endorsed in private members' debate on the floor of this very Legislature.

We have a fascinating opportunity over the course of the next weeks and months to send a message to the world that Ontario seeks to be North America's leading jurisdiction for the development of renewable energy and to do a much better job of taking advantage of the innate desire on the part of individuals to use less electricity. We know that One Million Acts of Green have been registered with the CBC. We know that something more than 80% of people have indicated that in their homes they've at least gone to the point of changing light bulbs. We know that people participated by the hundreds of thousands and took pride in their actions associated with Earth Hour. We know that the Green Energy Act introduced by our government yesterday offers a bold opportunity for Ontario to take a leap forward, to harness the resources that Mother Nature offers to us for free, to harness those in a fashion that takes advantage of the opportunities to give Ontarians, at a time when they desperately need them, more economic opportunities and more jobs.

I encourage all members through the course of this debate to bring the values of the people they represent to this discussion. I'm quite certain, if they do so, we'll be able to gain unanimous support for the Green Energy Act, moving Ontario forward as a leader in North America for the generation of renewable energy and helping to create a culture of conservation which will allow us all to do the right thing and take it easier on Mother Nature.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Ottawa-Orléans.



**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I rise today to speak in my capacity as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure. I want to begin my remarks about the proposed Green Energy and Green Economy Act by taking a moment to speak about the role of government, about the obligations we bear to meet the challenges of today while helping prepare for a better tomorrow. That is a fundamental test of good government, of wise government, of forward-looking government, and that is the test we have attempted to meet in drafting this act.

It is a plan for today, one that, if passed, would help create badly needed jobs and boost economic activity, one that would immediately encourage the expansion of renewable energy, one that would further encourage a culture of conservation and focus on energy efficiency. Yet it is also a plan for tomorrow, one that, if passed, would position Ontario as North America's green economy leader, one that would help to create well-paying, sustainable jobs for years to come, one that would help us create a future that is both more prosperous and more environmentally responsible.

We have heard already from the Premier and Deputy Premier. They have spoken about the broad benefits of this approach and, as well, the risks of failing to act. Accordingly, I want to focus my remarks on the specifics of the proposed legislation. In particular, I want to talk about the steps we propose to foster a new culture of conservation across the province of Ontario, to create incentives in the place of disincentives, to equip individual Ontarians rather than burden them, to encourage energy efficiency rather than waste. These proposed measures can be divided into two categories: what we would do to help at the local level and what we would do within the provincial public sector.

Let me start with the local.

First, we would establish mandatory electricity conservation targets for local distribution companies, those that act as local electricity providers, otherwise known as LDCs. If passed, the act would grant the minister the authority to issue directives to require targets be set, financial incentives be provided and accountability be required to encourage LDCs to design and deliver electricity conservation programs. Given the direct relationship between LDCs and individual users, this would ensure the creation and delivery of better programs and tools to households and businesses, with the assistance of the Ontario Power Authority.

Second, a priority near and dear to my heart is the need to bring an emphasis on energy efficiency at the local and even individual household level. One of the greatest obstacles is understanding. Talk to Ontarians about conservation and energy efficiency and you get a crystal clear response: "We're in. Now what do we do?" To that end, we would enshrine energy efficiency as a defining principle of the Ontario building code. This would help ensure that current best practices incorporated by most of our province's best builders become formalized. This provision would be subject to a five-year

review to ensure that we keep current with emerging sector trends. In addition, an advisory council would be established to give the government expert advice and counsel on an ongoing basis.

Next, we would work to designate Energy Star levels as the standard for the major common household appliances and, by doing so, continue to take a leadership position in North American standards for energy efficiency. Ontario's families are keen for clear direction when it comes to making an individual contribution to energy efficiency. This will do just that.

Finally, we would move to make home energy audits mandatory prior to home sales. This is an issue that I have personally championed for some time—introducing a private member's bill last fall entitled the Home Energy Rating Act. It is a provision that I have great confidence would encourage important investments in energy efficiency, among both homeowners and prospective sellers. This initiative has been endorsed widely—by the Green Energy Act Alliance, the Ontario Association of Home Inspectors, and many others. It would ensure that owners, realtors, sellers and buyers have detailed and accurate information on the energy efficiency of their homes. Armed with such understanding, it would be natural for many Ontarians to then take the next step and invest in retrofits and improvements. The result would be a win-win: homes that make better use of energy, and a helpful boost to economic activity in the home building and renovation sector.

These measures at the individual and local level would be complemented by leadership at the provincial level. Let me highlight three specific ways we will do this.

First, we would green all Ontario government and public sector buildings. We would invest in retrofits and energy efficiency. We would conserve more, waste less, and set an example through action. Under the proposed act, those with responsibility across the provincial government and the broader public sector would be required to prepare detailed conservation targets and plans for improvement. We would start with the government's directly held building stock and then, over time, expand to include our hospitals, schools and universities.

Second, we have consulted widely and have been told clearly that government programs and agencies require better alignment. Over the years, initiatives have been undertaken on an iterative and sometimes ad hoc basis. We have lacked the sort of integrated discipline that the proposed act would guarantee, if passed. Accordingly, we would reduce the maze that discourages green energy producers, users and individual Ontarians by better structuring our own operations and agencies.

Under the proposed act, all activities in this respect would be coordinated and conducted within the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure, through the renewable energy facilitator, who will help proponents developing renewable projects better understand the approvals process. This may sound like housekeeping, but don't for a moment mistake it as unimportant. These changes would produce a sharper focus, more responsive programming and increased accountability.



I realize my time is short, and I'm anxious to hear from others on all sides of the House about this signature legislative initiative, so permit me to conclude on two points.

First, I want to emphasize the confidence I feel that Ontario can seize this moment and foster a true culture of conservation. In truth, we believe that Ontarians are anxious to embrace this change: to adopt energy efficiency as the rule, rather than the exception. Our challenge is to put in place policies that would encourage this impulse and allow it to grow and expand. With this proposed act, we believe we have done so.

1550

Secondly, we know that this change would require some sacrifice. We are taking part in the global race for green jobs and investment; it would be foolish to think that something so coveted could be accomplished with ease. For that reason, we have taken pains to include provisions that would protect the most vulnerable in our society. Low-income Ontarians would benefit from targeted measures within the GEA to ease the cost of compliance and smooth the transition to a more energy-efficient future. This too is part of the role of government that I mentioned at the outset of my remarks, and it is a task that we take seriously.

This proposed legislation is a cornerstone of our plan for tomorrow. If passed, it would help Ontario become the preferred destination for green jobs, green investment and green energy. It would create immediate benefits and pave the way for a lasting culture of conservation. That is why I would urge all members to join me in expressing their support for the Green Energy Act.

**Ms. Laurel C. Broten:** I'm very pleased to stand in the House today as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, George Smitherman, and to speak in support of the Green Energy and Green Economy Act.

Le projet de loi, Loi de 2009 sur l'énergie verte et l'économie verte, poursuit la transformation du réseau de production d'électricité entreprise en Ontario pour en faire l'un des plus propres et plus respectueux de l'environnement au monde.

The Green Energy and Green Economy Act, if passed, will establish Ontario as the North American leader in green energy. This landmark legislation will benefit our people and our province in many ways. It will help to increase the development and use of renewable energy in Ontario. It will position this province at the leading edge of the green economy, spurring innovation and attracting jobs and investment. It will help us better protect the environment, boosting our fight against climate change and creating a healthier future for our children.

I am very proud of our government's efforts to significantly reduce our province's environmental footprint with the establishment of stringent targets to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and fight climate change. This proposed Green Energy and Green Economy Act is a significant step: It is progressive yet practical. It builds upon all the work this government has already done to

build a reliable electricity system, to increase Ontario's supply of renewable energy and to get off dirty coal.

Si la loi est adoptée, l'Ontario deviendrait le leader nord-américain de l'énergie écologique. La loi aurait pour but de renforcer les initiatives concernant la production d'électricité déjà entreprises par la province, dont l'élimination d'ici 2014 des centrales à charbon, la plus importante source de pollution atmosphérique.

To accomplish its goals, this act contains a number of key measures. If passed, this bill would create a feed-in tariff. What does that mean? Essentially, a feed-in tariff is an incentive structure. Through it, Ontario would offer attractive rates for energy generated from renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, water and biomass. These rates would be guaranteed for the life of the contract. They would be applicable to both small community-based and large commercial renewable energy projects, and this would create the certainty that investors need in order to build the projects, create the jobs and increase the supply of renewable energy in Ontario.

Feed-in tariffs are not a new idea—they have been pivotal to the growth of green energy in several European countries—but our new system would be unique to Ontario. Alongside fixed rates, we would set program goals. These would include establishing domestic content requirements for renewable energy technologies; ensuring domestic products and services would be used in new generation facilities; promoting regional development; and encouraging municipal involvement, as well as the participation of First Nations and Métis communities, in building our renewable energy sector.

With all these diverse elements in place and working together, Ontario would become a powerhouse of innovation and knowhow, the destination of choice for green power developers and a leading jurisdiction in green economy.

To boost Ontario's attraction to developers even more, the proposed legislation would ensure a streamlined approval process. Over the past five and a half years, our ministry has been made aware that the process of successfully launching a renewable energy project or an associated transmission project is much more complex and time-consuming than it need be. If passed, this proposed act would eliminate the red tape and duplication.

Most significantly, green energy projects would no longer be subject to the requirements under the Planning Act or, in most cases, the Environmental Assessment Act. Instead, the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Natural Resources would collaborate and co-ordinate their requirements in a streamlined process within a service guarantee. This would include a co-ordinated environmental registry posting process. This friendly approach would include the establishment of a renewable energy facilitator located within the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure. This office would be the first point of contact for proponents, guiding them through the approvals process, raising awareness of federal requirements and helping to make green energy projects move forward faster.



If passed, the Green Energy Act would also streamline the approvals process in ways that continue to protect public health and safety. For instance, many municipalities have struggled with the difficulty of balancing the proposals of wind project proponents and the desires of their residents. As a result, there is a patchwork of municipal bylaws concerning how close wind turbines can be to residential properties. Our proposed legislation would for the first time establish province-wide setback requirements for renewable projects adjacent to homes and sensitive areas. Provincial standards would also relieve municipalities of the burden of the extensive work that is required to build the capacity and scientific understanding of each technology for each individual municipality.

As a result of this act, if passed, the Ministry of the Environment will be responsible for proposing siting standards for renewable energy projects that ensure continued and consistent protection for the natural environment and the public interest. The Ministry of the Environment will also continue to monitor and consider ongoing research to make sure health and safety standards reflect the most current information.

Our government's goal of building more green energy projects faster and in a timely way will always be balanced with an equally important objective of preserving and protecting our air, land and water, our ecosystems and wildlife. Just as our government has implemented so successfully with birth certificates, another practical improvement in the approval process, as proposed by this bill, would allow our government to offer a service guarantee when it comes to renewable energy approvals. This is how it would work: In short, a renewable energy provider, having completed all the necessary documentation, would be assured of getting a decision on their application within a six-month time frame. This would give providers more certainty with respect to their planning and again make Ontario a more attractive and easier place for them to invest.

Si la loi est adoptée avec d'importantes modifications à 15 autres lois, dont la Loi de 1998 sur l'électricité, la Loi sur la protection de l'environnement et la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire, elle mettra l'Ontario sur la voie d'un avenir plus vert.

Après son adoption, d'autres règlements et politiques devraient aussi être mis en place au fur et à mesure que le gouvernement concrétisera son objectif d'une économie plus verte et d'un futur de conservation.

Voici quelques-unes des mesures importantes qui contribueront à élargir les projets d'énergie renouvelable qui devraient se créer après l'adoption de la loi proposée : créer un système plus attrayant de prix préférentiels garantis qui contribuera à stimuler l'investissement dans la production d'énergie renouvelable, à accroître la confiance des investisseurs et à améliorer l'accès au financement pour les projets d'énergie renouvelable; établir un processus d'approbation et simplifier et offrir des garanties de service pour les projets d'énergie renouvelable; établir le droit de se connecter au

réseau de distribution d'électricité pour les projets d'énergie renouvelable; nommer un agent de facilitation d'énergie renouvelable chargé d'offrir de l'aide et du soutien aux créateurs de projets afin de faciliter l'approbation des projets; et simplifier le processus d'approbation pour les grands projets de transmission, entre autres.

1600

I want to switch gears now and talk about how we propose to get all this new green energy that we will be generating as a result of this act into the marketplace. First, our government understands that increased generation must be balanced with new transmission capacity, and we intend to work proactively with our energy agencies to initiate investment in new transmission projects. This legislation, if passed, would also take additional steps. As I said a moment ago, it would ensure as-of-right access to Ontario's power grid for all renewable energy projects provided they meet technical and economic requirements. Once again, this is a sensible move. Providers must have assurances that they can connect to the grid when their project is complete in order to move ahead in the first place. Businesses, institutions and households have an equal right to expect that the green energy they're consuming is being provided in a reliable, safe and cost-effective way.

Another key provision that would bring Ontario's entire energy system into the 21st century: We would modernize our electricity network through a smart grid. This would involve a major greening of our electricity infrastructure, bringing in the latest information systems and upgrades and simultaneously creating thousands of jobs. A smart grid would allow us to effectively manage all the energy from both new and existing sources across the province. It would allow us to meet the changing nature of power consumption in Ontario, positioning us to take advantage of conservation technology such as smart meters as well as paving the way for innovations such as plug-in hybrid cars. It would also let us coordinate the production of power from large numbers of small power producers, thereby enabling plenty more small-power, green energy projects to be built.

I have to say, as a former Minister of the Environment, that I'm very thrilled by this prospect. I've had the opportunity to meet with people from across Ontario who are highly committed to a clean and healthy environment, and I've been struck by their shared desire to do what is right: to make responsible choices and to make a difference to the health of the planet. These new proposed provisions would give these determined individuals the chance to develop their own projects for their own use.

If passed, our legislation would eliminate the local barriers that many municipalities have in place that restrict benign technologies. So, if an environmentally conscious family wanted to install rooftop solar panels or ground source heat pumps in their homes, our act would support and encourage their efforts. Even more, it would enable these homeowners to access direct grants and low-interest-rate loans to bring their green dreams to fruition.



Other policies stemming from this act would support citizen-led renewable energy co-operatives. As the minister said, energy co-ops have been very successful in Denmark. They're typically comprised of local investors, farmers, homeowners or businesses that work together to create and operate a small green energy project. The Ontario model would establish a community power fund to help co-ops with softer costs such as engineering and legal fees so they could get up and running faster. It would also allow the groups to sell their renewable energy to the grid and distribute surplus funds back to the members.

Finally, if passed, the act would clear the way for municipalities and local distribution companies to invest in renewable generating facilities below 10 megawatts in capacity.

The proposed Green Energy and Green Economy Act is a bold plan. It would modernize and strengthen Ontario's energy system and bring more renewable energy projects, both large and small, to reality. It would ensure that our energy supply mix is one of the cleanest in North America and help our province continue to be a leader in the fight against climate change.

D'ici 2012, les investissements rendus possibles par la loi proposée soutiendront vraisemblablement plus de 50 000 emplois directs et indirects dans les domaines suivants : la conservation, l'énergie renouvelable, le réseau intelligent, ainsi que la modernisation du réseau de transport et de distribution. La teneur ontarienne des projets d'énergie renouvelable stimulera la création d'emplois en Ontario.

The proposed Green Energy Act, as I've said, is a bold plan. It would propel innovation, boost the economy, and create good jobs all across Ontario, in urban and rural communities, in the north, and in areas hard hit by the shrinking manufacturing sector.

The proposed Green Energy and Green Economy Act, if passed, would position Ontario to become a North American green energy leader, creating over 50,000 jobs in the next three years as well as generating billions of dollars in green economic investment.

This is a necessary piece of legislation: practical legislation, landmark legislation. If passed, this act will help ensure Ontario's future by building a stronger, greener economy and by better protecting our environment, combatting climate change and creating a healthier planet for generations to come.

I urge all members to offer their support for the bold and transformational initiatives contained in this act, and I look forward to further debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm pleased to add some comments to the speeches from the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, the member from Ottawa-Orléans and the member from Etobicoke-Lakeshore.

Certainly, there are some positive elements of this legislation in terms of promoting and facilitating the

development of renewable energy projects. However, I would say the opposition has many, many questions.

As you know, this bill was introduced yesterday, and it's scheduled for debate today, tomorrow and Thursday. It appears that the government is just trying to rush it through. When we really want to have constructive debate, you'd think they would allow some time for the opposition to look into it a little more.

We've asked for a detailed briefing on the bill so we can go through it with the ministry clause by clause and understand all the various parts. On the surface, we do have questions, like cost. The minister says there's going to be a 1% increase for the people of this province for their energy bills. I would say to anybody out there: Do you really believe them? This is the government that also said we wouldn't be burning coal after 2007. You know what? We're still burning coal, and it doesn't look like there's any time in the foreseeable future that we won't be burning coal.

There are questions about the powers that go to the minister. It seems like the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure is making himself into some kind of super-minister. I think there need to be some questions asked about that.

And the whole required energy audit: I wonder about the value of requiring everyone, when they're buying a new home, to spend the \$300 to have an energy audit. I think that's something that should be voluntary, as it was in our election platform—I know the minister mentioned that in his speech. It was voluntary in our election platform. Certainly, some people may decide that it makes sense, but I don't think we should require all people buying a home to have an energy audit.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** It was a pleasure to listen to the Minister of Energy speak to this bill, as well as the members from Etobicoke-Lakeshore and Ottawa-Orléans.

But I'm most impressed with the Minister of Energy, because if you listened to him, you would think there is going to be a revolution in green energy, just by the mere fact of how he speaks about it with great enthusiasm. He talks about this as a leap forward, as a tremendous opportunity, and you think, "We're waiting for the details."

There is indeed going to be a revolution in green energies. The revolution happens in places like Germany. Witness the fact that there, they have 25,000 megawatts of wind power—25,000 megawatts of wind power. You're never going to get there, and the reason why you're not going to get there is because you're putting a cap on green energies.

The other cap you've got is that 75% of your energy is coming from hydroelectricity and from nuclear; you are committed to that. You don't want to talk about it, but that's your commitment. If you did not make a commitment to nuclear, then the language that Minister Smitherman uses would be encouraging. Then you would think, "We're going to move the limits. We're going to



move the goalpost here.” But, you see, the goalposts are there; you’re only going to produce so much. And it’s nice and it’s okay, and we’ve got to do it, but please don’t make it seem like you’re creating a revolution.

1610

The minister also talks about the issue of domestic content rules, but the language he uses is “reasonable domestic content” rules, which means we don’t have a sense of what those domestic content rules are going to be. We don’t have a clue, and he doesn’t say. In response to our leader today, he didn’t say what those rules are going to be, and he doesn’t state it. But we’ll have more opportunities to speak about this as we go.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bruce Crozier:** I just want to add to or comment on the speeches today of three of my colleagues, actually. They all added to the second reading debate of this bill.

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** Very thoughtful.

**Mr. Bruce Crozier:** Very thoughtful comments as well, as my colleague adds.

But I think the important thing is that we are, at a time when it’s most needed, actually taking a giant step. I think it’s a little bit bigger step than my colleague across the way would acknowledge. And I expect that; I don’t expect you to jump up and support it the first day, but I do hope that over the next few days of debate that, as well as the government, the opposition parties will look at those sections of the bill that will be most helpful to our environment and to our economy.

I think, for example, of the patchwork that there is across this province when it comes to different municipalities applying different restrictions and regulations to the development of green power. Those will now be more common across the province. I think it’s even been compared by the minister to when we had a patchwork of smoking bylaws in various municipalities across the province. Now, these regulations that we are going to establish through consultation with the municipalities, with the public, will be established to be regulations that are common across the province. I think that will go a long way to making people better understand the need and appreciate green power, as well as helping communities to establish various sizes of green power projects. I look forward to that debate over the next few days.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I too enjoyed the presentation that was done by Minister Smitherman and the two members. Very few would debate the objectives put forward by this bill. Certainly, we in Ontario urgently need to reduce our greenhouse gases in order to minimize the already damaging effects of climate change on this province and on this planet. We urgently need to increase the proportion of Ontario electricity that is provided by safe, clean, renewable energy. We urgently need to expand and maximize energy conservation in this province by every single household, by every single business, and

we urgently need to support the development of a green economy in Ontario that provides decent jobs for the future, what the NDP calls the green jobs of the future.

Bill 150 calls for government investment to upgrade the electricity transmission and distribution grid to support a greater proportion of renewable energy. Minister Smitherman made a point of saying that this grid especially needs to be expanded in northern Ontario, the riding I represent, and few would argue with this.

It talks about a culture of conservation by greening public buildings and improving energy efficiency standards for appliances and making energy efficiency a priority for the building code. All of this sounds good. Bill 150 seeks to ensure that renewable energy projects are environmentally sound and don’t take years to get off the ground. There could be a little bit of controversy if they’re putting the wind turbine in your backyard, like what may be happening in my riding, but all of this has no data to back it up. We have to do the leap of faith. I hope that in the coming days of debates, we get more facts to support this wish.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our time for questions and comments. I’ll return to the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore, who has two minutes to reply on behalf of the government.

**Ms. Laurel C. Broten:** I’m pleased to reply to the members from Parry Sound–Muskoka, Nickel Belt, Trinity–Spadina and Essex.

I want to start by saying we’re happy to be here today debating, and we look forward to undertaking that debate over the next days and weeks. Yes, this legislation, the Green Energy and Green Economy Act, is extensive. It amends more than 15 statutes and will be the linchpin of many other additional changes to transform our electricity system, to transform the way we approach green energy in the province. We would expect nothing less could put in place transformational change than an extensive and complicated piece of legislation, and we appreciate being here in the House over the next days and weeks, and on to committee after that, to have that discussion with Ontarians.

The Green Energy Act, as we’ve said, is bold. It’s a series of coordinated actions which would, at the same time, enhance economic activity and reduce our impact on the climate. In my community in Etobicoke–Lakeshore, across the province and with the individuals I’ve had the privilege to talk to, Ontarians are clamouring for this change. They want to see this economy stimulated. They want to make it easier to bring renewable energy projects to life. They want to foster, as my colleague from Ottawa–Orléans has said, a culture of conservation, whereby we assist homeowners, government, schools and individual employers to transition to lower, more efficient energy use.

If passed, this legislation would create a projected 50,000 jobs over the next three years. We need these jobs in communities across the province. We need to take this bold step and action now. We need to be debating this in

the Ontario Legislature, and we need to move forward for this generation and future generations of Ontarians.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate? I recognize the minister without portfolio and chairman of cabinet.

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** I move adjournment of the debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading debate adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Orders of the day.

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** I move adjournment of the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1618.*



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

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Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
<b>Arnott, Ted (PC)</b>	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
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<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Brotten, Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
<b>Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Economic Development / Ministre du Développement économique
<b>Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
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<b>Carroll, Hon. / L'hon. M. Aileen (LIB)</b>	Barrie	Minister of Culture / Ministre de la Culture
		Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
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Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
<b>Crozier, Bruce (LIB)</b>	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
		Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
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<b>Hazel McCallion</b>	
Mrs. Amrit Mangat .....	5005
<b>Humber Valley Sharks</b>	
Ms. Laurel C. Broten.....	5005

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI

<b>Zero Tolerance to Violence on Public Transit Act, 2009, Bill 151, Mr. Colle / Loi de 2009 sur la tolérance zéro à l'égard de la violence dans les transports en commun, projet de loi 151, M. Colle</b>	
First reading agreed to.....	5006
Mr. Mike Colle.....	5006

## MOTIONS

<b>Private members' public business</b>	
Hon. Gerry Phillips .....	5006
Motion agreed to .....	5006
<b>Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions</b>	
Hon. Gerry Phillips .....	5006
Motion agreed to .....	5007
<b>Private members' public business</b>	
Hon. Gerry Phillips .....	5007
Motion agreed to .....	5007

## PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

<b>Multiple myeloma</b>	
Mr. Khalil Ramal .....	5007
<b>Workplace insurance</b>	
Mr. Norm Miller.....	5007
<b>Multiple myeloma</b>	
Mr. Bas Balkissoon .....	5007
<b>Public transit</b>	
Mr. Mike Colle.....	5007
<b>Child custody</b>	
Mr. Jim Brownell .....	5008
<b>Bathurst Heights Adult Learning Centre</b>	
Mr. Mike Colle.....	5008

## ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

<b>Green Energy and Green Economy Act, 2009, Bill 150, Mr. Smitherman / Loi de 2009 sur l'énergie verte et l'économie verte, projet de loi 150, M. Smitherman</b>	
Hon. George Smitherman.....	5008
Mr. Phil McNeely.....	5011
Ms. Laurel C. Broten.....	5012
Mr. Norm Miller.....	5014
Mr. Rosario Marchese .....	5014
Mr. Bruce Crozier .....	5015
Mme France Gélinas .....	5015
Ms. Laurel C. Broten.....	5015
Second reading debate adjourned.....	5016

# CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Tuesday 24 February 2009 / Mardi 24 février 2009

## ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

### Employment Standards Amendment Act (Temporary Help Agencies), 2009, Bill 139,

Mr. Fonseca / Loi de 2009 modifiant la Loi sur les  
normes d'emploi (agences de placement  
temporaire), projet de loi 139, M. Fonseca

Mr. Robert Bailey .....	4983
Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....	4984
Mr. Yasir Naqvi .....	4984
Mr. Randy Hillier .....	4985
Mr. Gilles Bisson .....	4985
Mr. Robert Bailey .....	4985
Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....	4986
Second reading debate deemed adjourned .....	4993

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Wayne Arthurs .....	4993
-------------------------	------

## ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

### Energy rates

Mr. John Yakabuski .....	4993
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	4993

### Energy rates

Mr. John Yakabuski .....	4994
Hon. George Smitherman .....	4994

### Child protection

Mr. Howard Hampton .....	4995
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	4995

### Green power generation

Mr. Howard Hampton .....	4996
Hon. George Smitherman .....	4996

### Renewable energy and energy conservation

Mr. John Yakabuski .....	4997
Hon. George Smitherman .....	4997

### Employment supports

Mr. Paul Miller .....	4997
Hon. Michael Bryant .....	4997

### Energy conservation

Mr. Charles Sousa .....	4998
Hon. George Smitherman .....	4998

### Renewable energy and energy conservation

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer .....	4999
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	4999

### Child protection

Mme France Gélinas .....	4999
Hon. Rick Bartolucci .....	4999

### Health care

Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis .....	5000
Hon. David Caplan .....	5000

### Ontario economy

Mr. Ted Chudleigh .....	5000
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	5000

### Health care funding

Mr. Paul Miller .....	5001
Hon. David Caplan .....	5001

### Northern Ontario development

Mr. David Oraziotti .....	5001
Hon. Michael Gravelle .....	5002

### Child protection

Mrs. Julia Munro .....	5002
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	5002

### Hospital security

Mme France Gélinas .....	5003
Hon. David Caplan .....	5003

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

### Diagnostic services

Ms. Lisa MacLeod .....	5003
------------------------	------

### Riding of Peterborough

Mr. Jeff Leal .....	5003
---------------------	------

### Tourism

Mr. Ted Arnott .....	5004
----------------------	------

### Hillside Festival

Mrs. Liz Sandals .....	5004
------------------------	------

### Sudbury jail

Mme France Gélinas .....	5004
--------------------------	------

### Waste disposal

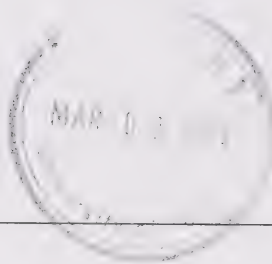
Mr. Khalil Ramal .....	5004
------------------------	------

### Renewable energy and energy conservation

Mr. Norm Miller .....	5005
-----------------------	------

*Continued on inside back cover*





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**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Wednesday 25 February 2009**

**Mercredi 25 février 2009**

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 25 February 2009

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 25 février 2009

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by a Jewish prayer.

*Prayers.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### FAMILY STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2009

### LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LE DROIT DE LA FAMILLE

Resuming the debate adjourned on February 23, 2009, on the motion for second reading of Bill 133, An Act to amend various Acts in relation to certain family law matters and to repeal the Domestic Violence Protection Act, 2000 / *Projet de loi 133, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne des questions de droit de la famille et abrogeant la Loi de 2000 sur la protection contre la violence familiale.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further debate?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to stand and speak for a few minutes on Bill 133, An Act to amend various Acts in relation to certain family law matters and to repeal the Domestic Violence Protection Act, 2000.

This bill was introduced in November 2008, and you know, of course, that our position is to make sure it goes for public hearings.

The reason I'm kind of interested in this is that I had the privilege of introducing a bill some time ago that dealt more specifically with domestic violence, and I would hope that this bill, in public hearings, would address some of the provisions that were brought to my attention through some tragic events in my riding.

I also want to pay some respect to our member from Whitby-Oshawa for her leadership on the issue.

Bill 133 is really an omnibus bill that amends eight existing statutes. It amends the Family Law Act, the Children's Law Reform Act, the Pension Benefits Act and the Domestic Violence Protection Act.

Family law includes divorce, separation, custody and access, child protection, adoption and the equitable division of family property. I'm sure that most members here, at least in their offices, are dealing with issues on a daily basis, which is a symptom or evidence of a system

that is in peril. The court process is perhaps not the best place to resolve some of these personal matters.

The difficulty with an omnibus bill is the number of details we have to get exactly right. When you're dealing with this number of bills in such a fragile environment, you want to make sure you're looking after what I consider to be the victims: in many cases, women and children, but indeed, families broadly, including grandparents. I would say, with the details here, that I would not want the size and complexity of the bill to detract from the immediate family and child protection measures, such as restraining orders and approving evidence in custody hearings. I would encourage full consultation with the legal community and also with individuals, families and all stakeholders.

Ontario's first child protection act was introduced in 1888, more than 120 years ago. The ongoing need to adapt child protection to meet the needs of today must guard against delays, because lives could be at risk. In fact, it's an important time to respect, or at least recognize, the work done by the Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth.

This text was released to members yesterday by the child advocate, and he said in his report quite a few things that I feel were—in fact, it's in the media today. He talks about 90 Deaths, Ninety Voices Silenced. That's the kind of attention and sensitivity we need to focus on when dealing with this very sensitive issue. I would refer viewers and other members to look at this report from the Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth.

In fact, there are many sad stories, which lead to my comments this morning, so that I can be on the record as standing up for protecting and criticizing any form of violence at any level by any individual. It just isn't acceptable, nor was it ever; it's just that we are more educated today about strategies to deal with it.

The need for urgency: Ontarians were shocked and saddened to learn early this week that 90 children known to child protection services died in 2007. That's the report I referred to. The child advocate says that a 2008 coroner's report suggests that most of these deaths were preventable. Equally shocking was the death of seven-year-old Katelynn Sampson in August 2008. As members will recall, her guardian was granted full and final custody of the young child earlier in the year, despite having a criminal conviction.

Current bills before the House: Bill 130, the Children's Safety and Protection Rights Act, 2008, was introduced by the member from Nepean-Carleton, expanding

Christopher's Law—the sex offender registry—to include child abuse, and expanding the role of the Ombudsman, the Children's Aid Society and school boards or hospitals. It's like anything. My wife has since retired as a teacher, but they're required to notify officials when they suspect abuse. That's the state we should be in: not to be intrusive, but when there's clear evidence, I think they should have a duty, whether it's a doctor or educator or whoever, to report that. Expanding the role of the Provincial Auditor and the advocate for children and youth is really what I'm advocating here, and amendments to allow the advocate to provide advocacy to students in schools and children in hospitals.

Children are the most vulnerable members of our society, and we collectively, without any partisan politics, should be standing up to protect them. Bill 128, the sex offender registry introduced by the member from Cambridge, is another example. The bill I introduced some time ago was Bill 10, An Act, in memory of Lori Dupont, to better protect victims of domestic violence. I introduced this bill December 5, 2007, and it went to second reading on May 5 and was referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy. It was based on provisions in Bill 117, passed in 2000, although they were never enacted. I want to repeat: That bill was unanimously passed here in the year 2000 and, under this government, was never enacted. Perhaps there are justifiable reasons. I don't know; I have inquired. That's why I reintroduced the Lori Dupont act, to bring the effects of the bill into law.

**0910**

On November 12, 2005, Lori Dupont, a nurse and mother, was killed by a man who had been her partner. This happened despite her efforts to obtain a peace bond to keep him away. In another case, Jennifer Copithorn was tragically killed in August 1998 by an estranged lover, partner, whatever. This one here was tragic because it really brought it home to me and, I'm sure, to our entire community in Bowmanville. This happened right across the road from my constituency office in Bowmanville. It was a very tragic, savage and unnecessary death. Jennifer was a young woman who worked at the bank across from my constituency office and she was stabbed repeatedly to death. Her former boyfriend was charged with first-degree murder.

Over a five-year period, an estimated 1.2 million Canadians are victims of domestic abuse. Domestic violence is not just a crime against the person abused. It deeply affects the children who witness the violence and the destabilization of families. That family extends across from in-laws to other relatives in the family and associates of the young children. It's just a tragic and unnecessary perpetration of anger and I just don't understand it. Domestic violence is a crime against the very foundation of an orderly and nurturing society. We all talk about families as being the basic unit of society. Now is the time to stand up, without partisan rhetoric, to implement the mechanisms for police and others to be able to act to protect people whose lives should not have been lost.

I do want to pay respect to people who helped in the drafting of Bill 10, the Lori Dupont Act. I looked at the history of the bill. Paul Hong is a young lawyer who was interested in this. Paul worked along with my son, Erin, who is also a lawyer. They did it on my behalf and on behalf of young men to show that they are very concerned as well.

I think education, even talking about this issue, is important, to say that we have responsibilities. It's not to paint all men as perpetrators of violence. I think that's false. It's a false argument. In fact, it's not the message. It's violence that we're trying to respond to here. It is not acceptable.

In some age groups or gender groups there are some predictors but I think, quite honestly, we've got to treat it fairly, because what I see under separation and the court order issue of support payments is huge. It is a huge deal, especially in this economy. Say someone was a stockbroker and the stockbroker was making a lot of money back then. A court order could be awarded for maybe \$5,000 a month in support or more, and now they're unemployed and going deeper into debt. All the debt is going to drive them crazy.

I'm not justifying it. It could be either partner. It's the way of resolving disputes and keeping in focus that we don't want people to go over the deep edge. I'm speaking in a broad sense. I respect Fern in my office, who does most of the work on the family law business. She's very good.

Bill 133 seeks to protect or prosecute breaches of restraining orders under the Criminal Code. What Bill 10, the Lori Dupont Act, did is it allowed access to a restraining order seven days a week, 24 hours a day. The courts determined that Lori Dupont was actually murdered while she was waiting for a restraining order to be issued. What we're saying is they should be accessible seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

I'm surprised that the court, whether it's the justices of the peace or the judges themselves in Family Court, wouldn't be supportive of the Lori Dupont Act. I would like to hear from them. Although we don't, and should not, have any direct intervention or interference with the courts, this august chamber here is responsible for setting the statutes and the laws. I think we can exercise our voice and we should.

This would allow for tougher enforcement and stricter bail conditions. Restraining order eligibility would be expanded to those living together in a relationship for fewer than three years. However, in Bill 133, I do not see the 24-hour-a-day, seven-days-a-week access to emergency intervention orders that was part of the private member's bill and originated in Bill 117. I'm really trying to say this is a very small amendment that could be implemented in this omnibus bill, Bill 133, and would allow for these restraining orders to be issued 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

I urge members to consider the amendment and provide for emergency intervention orders. That's really all I'm calling for; it is not a huge deal. It's really going to



save lives. We're seeing that with the Advocate for Children and Youth, and we've seen it in evidence I've cited here—two cases specifically. If you follow the media, I'm sure you will find them in many, many locations.

In my view, adding round-the-clock access to protection that is legally binding would strengthen the bill. I would urge members to find ways to make this bill stronger where protection of our children and families is concerned. Please consider the ideas that have been put forward in private members' legislation I have briefly mentioned—and I take no single credit; this is an action of the whole House and a sentiment that is shared, I would say, by all members. Not one of us has a monopoly on insight or ideas: not the government and not the opposition or the third party.

I think that if we worked collegially and collectively on issues that affect families and society's civility, we ourselves would be respected in the Legislature. As it is, we tend to get into name-calling and other degenerated activities that maybe aren't very helpful. By working together, we can ensure that the most effective child and family protection legislation is enacted.

We also need a full public consultation. I think the direction I have been hearing from the ministry is that there will be public hearings. That is where the real stories can be told and be permanently on the record to improve the civility of society by all of us. This could apply to children who are learning things from adults who aren't acting properly themselves.

I would ask officially for full public hearings at this point, and in responses I expect the minister would take it upon them to have full hearings on this omnibus bill which affects all the acts I have mentioned—in the time I have, maybe I will mention a few of them. We can prevent family violence by setting the right tone and the right process.

Even further, I'd be happy to seek other ways of mediation outside the very expensive, litigation-bound process we have today. What I find, without being cruel to anyone—as I say, I have members of my family who are lawyers, litigators—is that when you have a combative separation or divorce, a lot of money is spent in legal fees and the children may not have winter clothes. It's tragic. They end up with nothing. It really is sad. If we don't go to public hearings and hear from people who practise family law—many of them are saddened themselves at applications to court, pretrial hearings, all these things that take money. We have an opportunity in Bill 133 to make the lives of children and families better, and I would urge you to do that.

In the interest of using all the time I have been allocated, I'm just going to go over a bit of Bill 133 for members here.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** You're actually going to speak to the bill?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Well, I have. I think I've done an extremely thorough job and prepared notes.

Quite frankly, the part I like here is: "The Act is sequentially amended to account for amendments made

by the Bill to the Children's Law Reform Act, permitting a court to change a child's surname where a declaration of maternity or paternity is made. Specifically, section 5 of the Change of Name Act is amended to add a requirement that, where the court has made such an order changing a child's surname, an application under the Act to further change the child's surname requires the consent of the person declared by the court to be the mother or father of the child. As with the other consents required to be obtained by the Act in the circumstances, the requirement may be waived by a court on application."

That's one of the kind of nitty-gritty parts when there is a divorce: One of the spouses wants to change the child's surname. Some of the things that are in the bill can be pretty acrimonious.

**0920**

The bill also makes amendments to the French version of the Child and Family Services Act.

"The bill makes consequential amendments to section 57.1 of the Child and Family Services Act to update the provisions permitting the court to, while making a custody order, make a restraining order without requiring a separate application, and deeming the restraining order to be a restraining order made under the Children's Law Reform Act."

So they do mention the restraining order. The only small provision I'm looking for is to have it accessible seven days a week, 24 hours a day. That's how you save lives. When these things break out, you can't just run over to the court at 11 o'clock at night when somebody's acting out and ask for a restraining order. It's just not available. You'd have to make application for it and then file.

"The Children's Law Reform Act is amended by adding section 6.1, which permits a court to change a child's surname"—I mentioned that.

"In addition, three new provisions are added to create new requirements in cases where a person who is not the parent of a child applies for custody of the child." This comes back to another bill which the government has disallowed: grandparents who have taken custody of children from a family dispute where they no longer get that supplemental pay of about \$124 a month. That's simply wrong. Grandparents today, with all the chaos in family breakdowns, are often ending up as the caregivers and the support for the child. I think that support should be there.

I'm a grandparent, we have five grandchildren, and I would hope and pray that our five children and their spouses—they're not all married; two of them aren't married, but three are married—stay together for many, many years—happily, I hope—and their children, our grandchildren, are protected and safe. That's where I'm coming from on this bill. I would ask other members to give due consideration, and I look forward to public hearings.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Il me fait plaisir de donner des commentaires suite au député de Durham face au projet



de loi 133, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne des questions de droit de la famille et abrogeant la Loi de 2000 sur la protection contre la violence familiale.

Nous sommes, bien entendu, en accord avec la création d'un projet de loi qui protège les femmes et qui protège les enfants—le parti néo-démocratique est là pour défendre les familles, ce qui inclut les femmes et les enfants—et un projet de loi qui essaie de diminuer les coûts et le stress associés avec les processus de la Cour de la famille.

Il faut se rappeler que ce projet de loi fait suite à la mort de Katelynn Sampson, une petite fillette de sept ans qui a été tuée par ceux que la cour avait désignés pour la protéger. On a par la suite appris que sa gardienne, qui avait été désignée par la cour, avait un dossier judiciaire.

Nous sommes en accord avec le membre de Durham que le projet de loi ne va pas assez loin. Le projet de loi en lui-même est un pas dans la bonne direction, mais il faut regarder aux causes qui ont mené à ce type de problème : dans un premier temps, le sous-financement, qu'on parle de sous-financement des juges, d'accès à la juridique ou même d'accès aux services sociaux qui font que les enfants et les femmes se retrouvent dans une position de vulnérabilité où ils ont besoin d'être protégés par la cour.

On parle également des recommandations qui ont été faites suite au meurtre de M<sup>me</sup> Lori Dupont. Pourquoi est-ce que ce genre de recommandation-là, qui pourrait avoir un effet majeur pour protéger les femmes, reste sur les tablettes ? Les recommandations ne sont pas mises de l'avant.

Donc, nous appuyons certains des commentaires qui ont été faits par le membre de Durham et nous voulons voir ce projet de loi aller en comité.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I'd like to commend the member from Durham for bringing this forward. This is a very delicate situation in family law. The victims are the children and the parents if it's not a good breakup. But what I don't see in the bill and would like to see more of is counselling for the person—for whatever reason one person leaves and the children and the father may be distressed or the mother may be distressed over the breakup and they may not be acting in a normal situation because of their duress—that there be more counselling for these situations from social services so that they can get them right off the bat, so that the emotional stress does not come to a point where it becomes violent. They can talk to them and settle them down and maybe do some rebuilding that may even put these families back together, for whatever reason.

Especially in this time when there's economic strife in our communities, because of the job losses and that, these things escalate. So the ability for the court to immediately act in a restraining order is good because a lot of things happen within the first week of a breakup which wouldn't normally happen when somebody sits down and thinks about what they're doing or their actions. I think

this type of legislation will be beneficial to the protection of mothers, fathers, whatever the situation may be, and the children. I think it's long overdue.

Once again, I'd like to reiterate that I'd like to see more help for the one that's left behind, whether it be the father or the mother, to deal with the emotional breakdown of their life. I think that would be an important part of this.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

Member for Durham, you have two minutes to respond.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'd also like to thank the member from Nickel Belt, who, along with the member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, did mention the tragedy that I believe all the speakers when this was last debated—I'm checking the Hansard record here. I would think there were a number of speakers—I know Mr. Kormos spoke as well as the members from Nickel Belt and Hamilton East. They all sort of referred to the tragedy that we all talk about as being a point where we can identify why we're emotionally connected to this, a young child being murdered. A lot of it comes back to this restraining order, for all people who feel threatened by violence. That's really what we're trying to say.

First, we agree with the intent of the bill. We want public hearings across the province, especially in areas—probably remote areas. Can you think of someone living in a remote area who has no protection except that the courts can intervene? Maybe police can't be there quick enough. There needs to be some certainty around the strengthening of these intervention orders seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

When we're looking at this situation, I want to say on the record that Christine Elliott, the member from Whitby—Oshawa, is a lawyer. I believe she's practised in this area of law. She's very committed. I read her comments in the Hansard. I want to commend her for her advocacy for vulnerable people generally.

I look forward to this legislation going to committee, as has been suggested.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

Mr. Bentley has moved second reading of Bill 133. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

**Interjection:** No.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I didn't hear anybody say "no" from their seat.

**Interjection:** No.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** To which committee shall it be referred?

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I would ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Agreed?



**Mr. John O'Toole:** I would suggest that the bill might be better sent to the justice committee, as it is a justice bill.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The minister has the right to designate the committee. So the bill shall be referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy?

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** Yes, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** So referred.

0930

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS  
AMENDMENT ACT  
(TEMPORARY HELP AGENCIES), 2009

LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT LA LOI  
SUR LES NORMES D'EMPLOI  
(AGENCES DE PLACEMENT  
TEMPORAIRE)

Resuming the debate adjourned on February 24, 2009, on motion for second reading of Bill 139, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 in relation to temporary help agencies and certain other matters / Projet de loi 139, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi en ce qui concerne les agences de placement temporaire et certaines autres questions.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to speak on Bill 139, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act 2000, in relation to temporary help agencies and certain other matters. In simpler terms, this legislation, this proposed Bill 139, deals with regulating temporary agencies that hire individuals and assign them to a client site, and I will talk a little bit more about that further in my comments.

Before I do that, I want to make a couple of observations. I have often in this House spoken about the need to create sensible legislation, legislation that strikes the right balance: balance between the rights of the workers or employees and balance ensuring that we don't stifle entrepreneurship, that we give our businesses, our employers, the tools necessary to ensure that they run profitable, good, healthy businesses and employ more people in our community and in our economy. I believe that this particular legislation, Bill 139, strikes that right balance. It really, on one hand, upholds and further protects the rights of the workers, those temporary workers who use temporary agencies to get employment, and also the rights of the employers to make sure that they can rely on that type of temporary employee to conduct their business in a proper manner and be able to further contribute to our economy.

That type of balance is extremely necessary, especially for us as legislators, as policy-makers, when we are debating this type of legislation, to ensure that we have that right element in the legislation. In that regard, I want to

congratulate the Minister of Labour, Peter Fonseca, for proposing Bill 139, and I also want to congratulate his parliamentary assistant, Vic Dhillon, for the work he has done to ensure that we have this bill in front of us for debate.

I have heard about this issue quite a few times in my riding of Ottawa Centre. Since I was elected a year and a half or so ago, this issue has been brought up to me: For employees who go through temp agencies, what are their rights? What kind of benefits do they receive? There are a few groups who have brought that issue to me, but I'm going to focus on one group who has often spoken to me about this particular issue. Those are immigrants in our community, or new Canadians, as we may refer to them, those who recently arrived in Canada, in Ontario, to build a new life. They have often spoken to me about the need to have more safeguards in place to ensure that those individuals in our society who get jobs through temp agencies have their rights protected.

We are a country of immigrants, as you know, Mr. Speaker. We've built this country along with First Nations, the aboriginal communities, over many, many years to be a very prosperous society. We welcome people almost every day who come to Canada, who come to Ontario—my family included, almost 20 years ago. The majority of the people who come to Ontario are here in search of a better life. They are here to make sure that they are more prosperous than where they lived before, that their children receive good education and have those opportunities to succeed, so that they have equal rights, which is something extremely important to cherish—to prosper right here in Ontario, right here in Canada. So they, in essence, are economic immigrants. They are not really here for political reasons. Some are, but most of the people who come to Ontario are economic immigrants. They're here to build a better life. It is important for us to ensure that, as newcomers to our society, their rights are well known to them and are protected.

A lot of the new immigrants who come in are building a new life. They're starting out. It's akin to learning how to walk again. You're living in a new country, a new culture, a new society, a new climate, and you need to deal with that. You also need to build your economic life: to find a job; to fit into the profession, if you're a doctor, a lawyer, an engineer, and go through the whole accreditation process to make sure that you can practise in your respective profession.

Most of the immigrants, when they come in initially, so they can start sustaining themselves, so they can start paying their bills, so they can start making sure that their kids are going to school, engage in temporary employment because they've got to start living right away. They have to make sure. Those realities are very important. Not many people come to Canada with a lot of savings, so they have to integrate into the workforce right away. One recourse they have is temporary agencies, so they can find temporary employment. As they are adjusting well into their new community, as they are going back to university or college to get their new diplomas or



degrees, as they are going through the process of getting their professional credentials recognized, they need to make sure that they are paying their bills.

Today, we don't have many rights for those employees who work through temp agencies, which this bill, Bill 139, is trying to rectify. Those individuals who are working through these temp agencies are finding that they are really not taking that much of their salary home, that they are paying most of their salary through various fees, that there are barriers to them getting into permanent jobs while they are in these temporary positions etc.—and in a moment, we'll go through some of the elements of this legislation. It really creates a significant impediment for new Canadians as they are working very hard to integrate in the economic fabric of Ontario, and this legislation really goes to the heart of that.

I do want to acknowledge a lot of good work that is already being done in our cities, in our towns, in our villages, to help new Canadians better integrate, both socially and economically, in our communities. I know in Ottawa Centre, in my riding, there are a lot of great organizations that are working with newcomers to ensure that they have all the tools necessary. I want to take the opportunity to mention Carl Nicholson at the Catholic Immigration Centre, Lucy Spencer at the Ottawa immigrant women's organization, Hamdi Mohamed at the Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization, and Mengistab Tsegaye at LASI World Skills—great individuals, fantastic organizations, and they're working hard. I want to congratulate their staff, their boards and their volunteers for the tremendous work that they are doing in Ottawa alone and in my riding so that those who are making Ottawa their home are getting the right supports, are given the necessary tools, to build a better and more prosperous life in the city of Ottawa.

0940

This government has taken many other steps to ensure that immigrants have the right tools to integrate in their communities. The Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006, is another important example by which we are collectively working to ensure that we make it easier, more fair and equitable, so those individuals who have foreign credentials are recognized in a manner that is more effective right here in Ontario. There is a lot of work, no doubt, that needs to be done on that front, but I'm very happy that this government, in 2006, brought in the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act and passed it. Through this legislation, the Honourable Jean Augustine is the first Fairness Commissioner, who is overseeing the work that is being undertaken. But we need to continue working on that front, because all these pieces together will ensure that immigrants who come to Ontario have the right tools necessary to succeed. When they succeed, we all collectively prosper: as a community, as a society. So it is in our best interests to make sure that those who are coming and making Ontario their home every single day have the right, necessary tools.

Let me talk about this legislation, Bill 139, and what it's trying to accomplish. What does it do? Again, I

repeat that it's very important to remember that it really strikes the right balance between the rights of the employees and ensures that our businesses are running successfully.

First of all, I think at the most fundamental level what this legislation is trying to do is bring the whole mechanism that works through temp agencies—that is, the employment opportunities that are provided through temp agencies—under the fold and scope of the Employment Standards Act, 2000. For those who are watching these proceedings who don't know what the Employment Standards Act does, essentially the Employment Standards Act enshrines the rights of the employees and the obligations of the employers. In our daily lives, as we have various jobs in our communities, we are protected pretty much through the Employment Standards Act. So the number of hours you work, how much time you should get in terms of lunch break, statutory holidays or public holidays, how many and what days—all these things are within the scope and ambit of the Employment Standards Act. So essentially what we are doing through Bill 139 is that if you are hired through a temp agency and you've been assigned to a client, as they refer to a third party, to provide your services, you are also protected through the Employment Standards Act. That is what Bill 139 is trying to do and that's a big step, to ensure that the rights of those employees who are hired through temp agencies are protected through the Employment Standards Act.

There are four, I believe—in my reading through the act—factors which are extremely important or rights which are enshrined in this legislation which are worth discussing. The very first aspect is fees that are charged by temp agencies of the temporary employees. At the moment, in some circumstances and through some temp agencies, there are enormous amounts of fees which are being charged. So when an employee goes through this agency, not only is the temp agency charging the client, where they are placing the individual, but they are also charging the employee, I've heard, up to 30% or 35% of their salary. Of course that creates a huge, tremendous, onerous limitation on the individual, who is working very hard and then forgoing that much of their salary to the temp agency. Bill 139 would prohibit agencies from charging a fee to a person for becoming an assignment employee or a temporary employee, charging a fee for assistance in finding or attempting to find work with a client and charging assignment employees or prospective employees a fee for assistance in preparing a resume or for job interviews. This is a great direction.

However, agencies, of course, will be free to receive fees from clients because it's a business and they have to earn a profit as well. If a client comes to a temp agency, "I'm looking to hire a person to do some computer programming" and this temp agency finds an individual who meets the qualifications, then that client who requested them to find somebody is the one who will be paying a fee, not the employee who has been assigned to do the work. That employee, then, can take all the money



they make, everything they're earning from that particular position, to their home, to their families and, as a consumer, spend it back into our economy—an important aspect.

The second element that's very important is the issue of reprisals. In many instances, we know that if the relationship goes sour or if the person leaves—a person is looking for a permanent job at the same location—that there are circumstances where there are reprisals. There are some significant prohibitions and enforcement measures in Bill 139 to ensure that reprisals don't take place.

Just to give you an example, Bill 139 would prohibit the clients of agencies from engaging in reprisals against assignment employees for asserting their rights. Currently, if a temp agency employee is on an assignment and finds his or her rights are being abused—for example, being forced to work excess hours—and if that employee complains to the client, he or she could be labelled a troublemaker and told not to come back. Even though the client company has reprised against the employee, that individual has no remedy currently against the client company under the current Employment Standards Act rules. Bill 139 would prohibit this kind of reprisal, a very important element in order to ensure that the rights of those employees who work in temp agencies are fully protected.

There are very important information provisions as well in this bill. Agencies will be required to provide certain information to the assignment employees in writing, such as the client's name and contact information when offering a work assignment, wages, benefits, hours of work, the pay schedule associated with the assignment and a general description of the work to be performed for the client.

On the surface, this sounds very basic, as to, "Oh, why would you need this?" or "Of course that should be done." We have seen and heard of circumstances in our communities where people have been given an impression that they would be working at a certain location for certain hours, but in reality the job is totally different, the work hours are far in excess of what the person is getting paid, and there's no accountability. There is no legal enforcement against that.

What this particular provision around information is trying to do is to rectify the situation where there is an obligation on behalf of temp agencies to provide certain information to the potential employee so that the person can make a decision on whether to take the job or not based on proper information; there is full transparency associated with it.

Lastly, there are provisions dealing with undermining and eliminating barriers to permanent employment, because one of the things we want to see is that if a person gets a temporary position and if it can become permanent, that it takes place. So Bill 139 will prohibit preventing a client from hiring an agency's assignment employee, charging the client a temporary-to-permanent fee after six months or more have passed since the employee was first assigned to the client, restricting clients from pro-

viding references to an assignment employee, preventing an assignment employee from taking permanent employment with a client of the agency and charging the employee a fee if the employee should find permanent employment with that client. These are very important provisions to ensure that the rights of the employees who get a position through temp agencies are fully met.

I see that my time is running out. I think what I would like to say in conclusion is that this legislation very much works hand in hand with this government's poverty reduction strategy to ensure that members in our community, our families, working families, have the right opportunities to succeed. Making sure that we enshrine the rights of those employees who get jobs through temp agencies is extremely important.

Yesterday, I mentioned the Payday Loans Act, which was passed last year through this Legislature. It's another important step to make sure that the rights of those individuals and working families in our communities are protected, that they have the safeguards on their side to ensure that they're not being taken advantage of and they have the means to take their hard-earned incomes home so they can spend it on themselves and their families and put themselves first.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to speak on Bill 139.

0950

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I listened carefully to the comments made by the member from Ottawa Centre. For the most part, I would say, having worked in personnel and labour relations for a number of years with General Motors—in better days of General Motors, I might say. My point is this: I think almost everyone here would agree that on compliance with the existing Employment Standards Act, we're onside. I think, more importantly, it's important to put on the record that the main debate today is about the status of the temporary worker. This is someone—it may be a young person, a person re-entering the workforce, a person wanting to work part-time, different kinds of things to maybe augment the family income; but most important here, we should keep the focus on this: It's about a job. First, it's about a job.

What do we have in Ontario? We have a slightly contracted labour force—about 300,000 people without a job. Don't lose sight of the state of the economy and talk about these small fragments of important economic issues. That being said, if you read the sections carefully, there are a few sections that should cause you some concern. I'm referring to section 74.2 of the act that it's amending. It says: "... the part" of the act "does not apply to certain kinds of work assignments made under certain contracts with community care access corporations." Wait a minute here. What are the exclusions, if it's good for all and you are making great trumpeting sounds about the fairness of it all? It is not consistent.

It's my understanding as well that certain agencies—let's look at the health care debate. When they know that



there's an outbreak of SARS or whatever, they need to man up quickly for a period of time until they deal with this emergency issue, and then they go back to their normal employment levels. I'm not certain that this bill is clear enough on what it's trying to achieve, so I'm looking forward to public hearings on this bill, because it's poorly drafted.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The member for Nickel Belt.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I want to talk about some of the comments that were made, basically about the issues facing temporary agency workers. One would tend to believe that they can all be put into the same basket and treated the same way, when this is not the case at all. The issues addressed in this bill represent only some of the issues facing temporary agency workers and peripheral workers more generally, but it certainly doesn't cover it all. In reality, we need to get at the fundamental changes in peripheral workers in today's market. There are broader issues that have to do with fundamental rethinking of the Employment Standards Act.

In Sudbury, up to a few months ago, mining was booming. They couldn't hire people fast enough and they certainly relied on temporary agency workers to come and fill the need, the intention being that they were not able to recruit and give full-time employment, so they used agencies to help in the short term. But here again, even in those circumstances, the Employment Standards Act failed those people. It failed them in terms of WSIB coverage. Might I remind you that mining is still a very high-risk occupation in this province. Once you deal with a temporary agency and you're considered an independent contractor, you are not covered.

So there are all kinds of issues that need to be added on to this bill if we want it to achieve the goal that it set out to do. We, too, are looking forward to seeing this bill in committee so that it can be modified to do what it set out to do.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I want to thank my colleague the member from Ottawa Centre for his eloquent speech detailing the important elements of this bill. I think he said it right. This bill is an important step toward reforming temporary agencies in the province of Ontario, which play a pivotal role in our community, but sadly, there was no regulation in this element of our economic structure. I think it's important to regulate them and make sure all the people who are working through those temporary agencies are well protected, especially, as you mentioned, the newcomers who do not understand the rules and regulations of this province, who are looking badly for jobs and do whatever is possible to feed their families. I think that it's our obligation, our duty, to protect everyone, especially the vulnerable among us who are looking for jobs.

So I want to congratulate my colleague for telling this House and the people of Ontario about the important elements of every step and why we introduced this bill

and why it's important for all of the people of Ontario that this bill pass and become law in the province of Ontario to govern those temporary agencies.

Also, and I heard many different people speaking before us today and the other day, it's not against the temporary agencies. It's not against anyone. I know some of them do a good job trying to find jobs for many people across the province of Ontario. But it's important to make some rules and regulations to make sure all those temporary agencies are working according to the rules and laws. Many people, especially the workers, sometimes pay the price because some of those temporary agencies are fly-by-night agencies and they don't pay the workers. That's why it's important to regulate this industry.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

Member for Ottawa Centre, you have two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I want to thank my colleagues from Durham, Nickel Belt and London—Fanshawe for their insightful comments in response to my comments on Bill 139.

I want to reiterate that this legislation is important to ensure that, for those individuals who are working through temp agencies, those individuals who are working very hard—and as I was alluding earlier, a lot of them happen to be newcomers to Canada—to build their lives, to integrate into this new society, into this new province, this country which they are calling their home now, those workers' rights are protected under the Employment Standards Act. Bill 139 is doing exactly that. It's making sure that temp workers, or assignment workers, as they are referred to in Bill 139, are recognized in the legislation, that they are protected by the obligations and the rights that are outlined in the Employment Standards Act so that they are full participants in our economy.

I think it's even more important today, given that we're going through some tough economic challenges not just in Ontario, not just in Canada, but across the globe, if you look at some of the Asian countries which are suffering far more than we are in Canada—and we are fortunate for that—that we create measures and we have safeguards like that so we encourage employees to be full participants in the workforce so that their rights are protected. We need all of us at our best to ensure that we contribute to the economy.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to speak to Bill 139, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000, in relation to temporary help agencies and certain other matters.

I'm disappointed that we're here in this Legislature once again debating another regulatory bill when hard-working Ontarians are losing jobs by the thousands. As a result of this bill, if it passes the way it has been written, there will be more unemployment. Ontarians are looking



to their government for some help. You can't call a late budget help, or the fact that we were fiscally in a full-blown recession—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Member for Burlington, you may be disappointed, but we are discussing Bill 139 and I would appreciate if all members would keep that in mind in their debate.

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**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like the minister to tell me why he is creating make-work projects when we have much more urgent business to attend to. Deflecting from that business with this bill does not serve us well in this Legislature.

Taking up valuable debating time when we are struggling is not appropriate. This is yet another bill and another example of a good idea not being followed through appropriately. It does not identify the hardships that will ensue for firms that are scrupulous and for their employees. I understand that there are some firms that take advantage of employees, but the legislation should target those companies and those companies only.

Did Minister Fonseca say, "Mr. McGuinty, I know that the economy is weak and that we don't have a plan to make it better, but what I'd like to do is make it harder for the businesses who are out there finding employment for transitional and temporary labourers to operate"? What planet are we on here?

This is yet another bill that is taking time in this House when we need to focus on other business. The private sector is the only sector that will suffer from this bill, because those contracted by government agencies will not be affected by this bill. Why is that? That creates a very unlevel playing field. I've amassed a great deal of experience in how some of these regulations are rammed through without much public consultation. The honest truth is, we are hurting the very businesses who are picking up the slack for this government's inaction.

A constituent of mine who provides non-medical in-home care to seniors and others in need of daily assistance shared their concerns with me over the impact that Bill 139 would have on their clients and their business. Their business is thinly margined. The proposed changes will add costs and ultimately drive up the cost of their services for their seniors who can ill afford that increase right now. Many of their home care workers want the flexibility of casual labour. As employers, they need to tailor work schedules based on clients' needs. This should not trigger termination. There are parts of the bill that are clearly aimed at preventing abuse from unscrupulous employers and they wholeheartedly support those, as I do, as it works to improve those situations.

My colleague from Thornhill's stakeholders have shared these objections to Bill 139:

"Our primary concern is the removal of the 'elect to work status' and how it will effect notice of termination.

"This cost burden will make it impossible for clients to continue to use agencies which they have come to depend on to remain competitive in a global economy. The

use of temporary workers helps them manage peak periods and fluctuations." This bill wipes all that out.

"This will remove the flexibility that many organizations have come to require in this global economy with goods arriving from various ports.

"Many of these organizations will leave this province if that flexibility is lost and move to a more business-friendly environment. With what is occurring in the US, they will continue to receive an even greater incentive to do so.

"Numerous large organizations have temporary workers as part of their business plan, including many with unionized environments.

"Those organizations that do not move will ultimately be forced to consistently turn over its workforce in an effort to minimize such impact.

"This will force all parties to immediately turn over the staff prior to three months of employment to avoid the issue altogether.

"How can such a policy truly benefit a worker that is trying to develop the skills to gain better full-time employment, when they are displaced every 10 weeks?

"Please remember that many of these workers are new Canadians with good work ethic and skills, but lacking the communication skills clients would require for them." They try to take temporary employment while they gain the communication skills in order to obtain full-time employment.

"Working temporary assignments as a starting point provides them with an opportunity to contribute, pay taxes and feel proud of themselves.

"Statutory holiday pay" is "becoming mandatory effective January 2, 2009. Our agency has paid statutory holiday pay to a percentage of our workforce based on attendance, longevity etc. so we will be able to digest such a notion," says this company.

"However, the cumulative effect of this with the other proposed changes will be economically devastating to our industry and our clients.

"Overall it is the timing of such a mandate that is disturbing. Our province is facing a financial crisis"—just as it is in the US and globally.

"Many areas are constructively working with business to increase cash flow and employment opportunities. Ultimately such a mandate increases the cost of our client organizations at a time when even the largest, most stable organizations are struggling to survive.

"Such policies will have a negative impact on our clients, ourselves and ironically the workers that such a bill was trying to protect.

"These workers will be easily replaced in such a market, and given no chance for longer assignments unless they are truly extraordinary yet will have a negative impact on morale and overall efficiencies."

Sad tale to tell.

The Association of Canadian Search, Employment and Staffing Services, more commonly known as ACSESS, says:



"There are three technical shortcomings within the bill which require improvement, otherwise these areas will cause an overall failure to achieve the stated objectives.

"These shortcomings unintentionally create an overly complex set of rules that are administratively unmanageable for any employer and may be impossible to monitor and enforce.

"These shortcomings will also unintentionally cost thousands of jobs and cause significant hardship for the people the bill was specifically designed to protect."

In the continuance of employment while not working category, ACSESS is very concerned with subsection 74.4(2) because it creates an implied continuance of employment while not on assignment, which in turn constructs an inconsistency between the employer's obligations and the reality of the employment context. This is inconsistent with every other jurisdiction within not only Canada, but North America. The legislation fails to appreciate the nature of temporary employment and the staffing services industry. It creates a different and higher standard for staffing company employers and creates a higher cost of burdens and liabilities for temporary staffing companies compared to all other employers within every other industry. ACSESS is very concerned that this proposed amendment will result in a significant reduction in the number of short-term employees being hired and will result in higher unemployment in the province of Ontario. This provision will cause the greatest harm to the thousands of employees who choose—because there are people who choose—temporary employment and benefit significantly from the flexibility and training that is provided. Moreover, it imposes a higher legislative standard on staffing industry employers and contrasts existing provisions of the Ontario ESA.

There are recommendations for the continuance of employment while not working. They suggest that we don't codify a continuance of employment and recognize and respect periods of active versus inactive employment. There is no employment when the assignment employee is inactive—that means not on assignment. So they're suggesting we delete clause (b). Do not impose a different and higher legislative standard on staffing firm employers.

ACSESS is also very concerned with the proposed amendments in the area of notice of termination and severance. The amendments set up a general rule that an assignment employee will be deemed to be terminated and severed if he or she is not assigned work for a period of 35 consecutive weeks, subject to some exceptions. The amendments also set out detailed rules respecting how to calculate termination and severance pay for assignment employees. As is the case with the issue of continuance of employment, the amendments proposed within Bill 139 construct an inconsistency between the employer obligation and the reality in the employment context. This is inconsistent with every other jurisdiction within Canada and within North America, and the legislation fails to appreciate the nature of temporary employment term contracts and the staffing services industry.

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Section 74.11 amendments establish a new obligation for staffing services employers in the areas of notice and termination. This section creates a separate and higher standard for staffing company employers and creates a higher cost of burdens and liabilities for staffing companies compared to all other employers within every other industry. This is not fair. These amendments also stand in direct contrast to the government's stated intent, which is to ensure that Ontario's employment legislation recognizes the needs of temporary employees and employers in a fair and balanced way. The proposed amendments will, however, create confusion and ambiguity for workers and employers, while also creating an impossible standard for record-keeping and administration associated with inactive workers. The amendments are prohibitive from an administrative standpoint. What are we doing? Increased costs disable staffing companies' ability to provide services to clients and to job seekers. This isn't right.

Short-term workers who are unemployed and underemployed and who are in most need of work will either not be offered employment because of the increased costs associated with not remaining consistently employed, or they will be permanently terminated prior to achieving the three months of tenure. This will not have a positive impact on the removal of barriers and will serve to limit employment opportunities for Ontario workers.

There are recommendations for termination and severance. That is to delete subsection 74.4(2):

"An assignment employee of a temporary help agency does not cease to be the agency's assignment employee because, ...

"(b) he or she is not assigned by the agency to perform work for a client on a temporary basis."

Do not impose a different and higher legislative standard on staffing firm employers. Respect well-established and recognized employment principles and provisions contained in the act.

Ontario Employment Standards Act regulation 288/01 identifies employees who are not entitled to notice of termination or termination pay under part XV of the act, subsection 2(1). It states that the notice of termination and termination pay requirements of the ESA do not apply to an employee who was hired for a specific length of time or to do a specific task. Now we're contradicting.

Regulating business terms and client fees within service agreements: Paragraph 8 of subsection 74.8(1) and "Exception" subsection (2) limit a temporary help agency from charging a fee to a client in connection with the services provided. The client is always a company or organization and is never the worker or candidate. Controlling financial business terms between a staffing service and client represents a misapplication of employment standards legislation in the area of consumer and commercial transactions.

The ESA governs the relationship between employers and employees in Ontario. The act should not be misused to interfere with established contractual business agree-



ments between staffing firms and their clients. Temporary help services incur significant advertising, recruitment, background, screening, risk and other overhead costs and should be permitted to offer their services to clients without the government's arbitrary interventions, limitations and restrictions upon legitimate business terms.

This provision fails to provide any meaningful benefit to low-wage workers and will significantly damage the largest percentage of the industry providing this important service in the areas of information technology, accounting, engineering, medical services and other professional services. These amendments will cause significant hardship and irreparable harm to staffing service companies, and by extension to their clients and the candidates for employment.

There is a recommendation for regulating business terms and client fees within service agreements. The suggestion is to remove paragraph 8 of subsection 74.8(1) and "Exception" subsection (2), which interfere with business terms, and refocus attention on employment-related issues such as employment agreements and employment terms so that a worker is never unfairly restricted from seeking employment with prospective employers.

The timing of this legislation is concerning, both in terms of meddling with employers—good employers—in a challenging economy, and how swiftly Mr. McGuinty wants to implement this bill. The implementation is to be a mere six months after the bill receives royal assent. That seems a little quick to me. I would say that the stakeholders have given this bill more thought than the government has and the quality of their argument proves that. It's a true shame—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Excuse me, member for Burlington. I'm sorry, but we've reached 10:15.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** According to the standing orders, this House is recessed until 10:30 of the clock.

*The House recessed from 1016 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** It is a great pleasure for me today to introduce some elected representatives from the riding of Peterborough. First of all, we have the warden of Peterborough county, Ron Gerow; the deputy reeve of Havelock-Belmont-Methuen, Mr. Andy Sharpe; J. Murray Jones, the reeve of Douro-Dummer; Karl Moher, the deputy reeve of Douro-Dummer; Jim Whelan, the reeve of North Kawartha; and Barry Rand, the deputy reeve of North Kawartha. They're here today to celebrate Peterborough-Northumberland-Quinte West Day here at Queen's Park. Let's give them a warm welcome.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I have two introductions today. First of all I have Carolyn Tripp, director of planning

from the township of Georgian Bay, who's here visiting. Also, we have Jeff Johnston, who is the mayor of Kearney, here at Queen's Park today.

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** I want to welcome 90 grade 5 students from McKinnon Public School. They are here at the Legislature today and they will be in the Legislature later on. I also want to extend a very warm welcome to their teachers and the volunteers who are with them.

**Mrs. Linda Jeffrey:** I'd like to introduce my new intern, who is visiting from the University of Akron, Ohio, the Bliss Institute of Applied Politics. His name is Richard Carnifax. I'd like to welcome him. He's here until May 2.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I take this opportunity, on behalf of the Minister of the Environment and page Rachel Goldstein, to welcome her mother, Liz VanDenKerkhof, sitting in the east members' gallery today; and on behalf of the member from Wellington-Halton Hills and page Emily Wilson, her mother, Susan Wilson; her father, Don Wilson; her sister, Elizabeth Wilson; her grandmother, Ellen Dolon; and her godfather, Dino Vavala, sitting in the west gallery this morning. Welcome to all of you to Queen's Park.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ENERGY CONSERVATION

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** This is for the Premier. The editorial in today's National Post says it all: "An Energy Plan that Won't Help." They say that the energy minister's boast of only a 1% increase in energy costs cannot be believed.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Please continue.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** They go on to say the following: "Just because someone slaps the word 'green' on a piece of legislation doesn't make it intelligent or forward-thinking. This is not the energy policy that Ontario needs...."

Premier, what do you have to say to the National Post? They condemn your policy. Have they got it right and you've got it wrong?

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Nepean-Carleton may want to be in her seat.

Premier.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'm always interested in getting the views of the good people at the National Post, but they are not really my intended audience when it comes to the Green Energy Act. We're focused on Ontario families and Ontario businesses. We are very eager to move forward with our Green Energy Act. It's fundamentally about new jobs, it's about clean, green electricity and it's about fighting climate change. We have



found a way through public policy to make sure we can do all of those things. Fifty thousand jobs I think is the single most important achievement that we will make through this Green Energy Act.

I thought at one point in time that my colleague opposite was supportive of these kinds of measures. I find it passing strange that he's no longer interested in pursuing this kind of progressive policy.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** They talked about the price of energy under this act, Premier, and you and the minister like to use your mothers as examples. I want to talk about Germany and Denmark, where energy costs are four times what they are here in Ontario. Even if energy rates only rise to half of what they are in Germany and Denmark, your mothers will have to reduce their consumption. Even if they reduce it by 20%, their energy bills will still be 70% higher than they are today. How are your mothers going to feel about that?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Just to stick to the big picture for a moment, there are a few things that we know with absolute certainty. The price of oil and gas is going up. We know something else for sure: Over time, the price for solar power will come down, the price for wind power will come down, the price for biomass and biogas will come down. We know for sure that when we buy our oil and gas, we're not creating a single job. We know for sure that if we invest in solar, in biogas and biomass and wind power, we're creating thousands and thousands of jobs in the province of Ontario. We're putting our money on the future, not on a past that's gone.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** We'll talk about those jobs in a few minutes, Premier, but maybe you're going to wish at the end of the day that you were still being scolded on the Lord's Prayer.

If the Premier doesn't like what the National Post has to say, maybe he's a little closer to the Toronto Star. An article by Tyler Hamilton questions whether our colleges and universities are even equipped to train the workers to work on these energy projects. He speaks to Frank Macedo, an electrical engineering consultant who used to oversee the transmission planning for the province. He said that the jobs you're promising aren't going to happen in the next three years; more likely five to 10 years.

Premier, the experts in the field don't agree with your figures. Either you didn't consult with them before you put together this bill or you've ignored their advice. We need jobs today, not five or 10 years from now.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I love this challenge. They're telling us that we're going to have to take heroic measures in order to ensure that we can train enough people; I love that challenge. They're telling us we're not going to be able to keep up with the demand for these kinds of new initiatives and these kinds of jobs; I love

that challenge. That's why we're going to continue to move ahead.

You know, again, I'm wondering what happened between the election and now when it comes to the Conservative Party. One of their specific commitments, and I'll quote it for you, says, "We will require home energy audits before every sale of a house." That was good policy then; it's good policy now. What happened to them in the face of a little bit of opposition?

## RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ENERGY CONSERVATION

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** My question is for the Premier. Back to the same—

*Interjections.*

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I can't even hear—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I can hear you. Member?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** The Premier touted this bill as part of his stimulus package. Again, the National Post points out: "It's intriguing that the Ontario government should be pursuing such a scheme at a time when the best minds, in all the governments of sufficiently advanced democracies, are frantically trying to figure out 'stimulus' measures for putting fast cash in the pockets of those who need spending money"—rather than saddling Ontarians with a new \$300 tax on their homes.

Premier, why don't you talk about how you're going to put \$300 into their pockets instead of taking it out of their pockets to pay for an audit?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I know that my colleague is making reference to our new home energy audit requirement, but again, I'm going to quote from the platform: "We will require home energy audits before every sale of a house so that the market will reward homes which are energy efficient. This will be a signal to homeowners that they will get a return on energy investments in their homes."

1040

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Who said that?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** They said that. They were right then and they're wrong now. Nobody ever said putting in place good public policy was going to be easy. Why are they running from a little bit of opposition?

I'm convinced that at the end of the day, when Ontarians come to fully understand what this is all about—50,000 jobs, clean energy and fighting climate change—they will want to know how quickly they can get on board.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Premier, there's nothing green about an act that is going to put consumers, families and businesses in the red. If you want \$300 audits, then pay for them. Don't take more money out of taxpayers' pockets, ratepayers' pockets. Because it's not just their energy bills that are going to skyrocket; the cost of everything they buy or produce is going to go up under this legislation. We see that every time the price of oil spikes. The



difference is that with this bill there will be no hope of price relief for consumers in the future. Talk about kicking people when they're down.

Premier, why would you force Ontarians to pay more for everything they need at a time when they can afford it the least?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, it's interesting to observe the twisting about on the other side there. Here's a quote from the MPP for Durham during the course of a debate when one of my colleagues, Phil McNeely, introduced this very concept as part of a private member's bill. He said in response:

"I want to commend the member for doing the right thing....

"The point I want to make is this: First of all, this was one of the planks in our platform in the election.... Okay? It was in our platform. Therefore, it must be a good decision. It's efficient use of our resources, in the general sense."

What happened to this party, which was so wed to this progressive concept before the election? Now, in the face of a little bit of opposition, they're wilting, they're melting, they're putting as much distance between them and this as they possibly can.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** You know, Premier, we have to wonder about your and the minister's mindset in designing this bill. Look at the draconian measures in the bill: warrantless searches into businesses—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** Speaker, this is too much fun.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** You want to sit in this chair and experience it? I want to be able to hear the question, though. Please continue.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** You have to wonder where the Premier and the minister's mindset is on the design of this bill. Let's look at the draconian measures in the bill: warrantless searches into businesses, that the minister didn't even know about when asked about it by the media yesterday; search warrants to get into people's homes to check on compliance with the act; and finally, telling municipally elected officials that the Premier and the minister are going to override their rights, as the elected representatives of their people, to write laws and bylaws within their municipalities.

Once this bill is passed, the precedent will be set. Premier, is this how municipalities can expect to be treated in the future? What other municipal powers do you intend to strip away from those duly elected representatives?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I had the opportunity just a couple of days ago to speak at the combined convention of the Good Roads people and the Rural Ontario Municipal Association, and spoke to this very issue. It was very well received. There is a—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I was there. You didn't even talk about it. The bill wasn't even tabled yet.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The issue of trying to keep the tone down goes both ways within this House. The honourable member just asked the question, and I would hope that he would at least listen to the response.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** There was great receptivity to the idea that we can do something together as Ontarians to create jobs, to fight climate change, and get clean and green electricity. There was also an understanding that it's very important that we ensure that we have an economic environment that welcomes those kinds of investments.

We're going to work with our municipal partners to make sure that we get a provincial standard right. What I am saying is, you can't say no to a wind turbine because you don't like the look of the darned things. We're going to find a way—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is to the Premier. I wonder, does the Premier recognize this quote? "It doesn't make any sense that a worker in Thunder Bay has to work more hours to qualify and get fewer weeks of EI support than a worker in Fort McMurray. Surely, a worker in Thunder Bay or Windsor or Hamilton deserves the same support as a Canadian living in Alberta."

This morning, we learned that the number of Ontario EI recipients has increased by 30%. What has the Premier done since he made the quote in August 2008 to ensure that Ontario EI recipients are treated fairly?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I appreciate the question. My colleague will know that as a result of efforts made, both by our government and collectively through a few resolutions in this House, we have together secured some real gains for the people of Ontario on a number of fronts. I want to thank my colleague and his party for their support when it comes to achieving those gains. But there is more work to be done and my honourable colleague puts his finger on it. The fact of the matter is that workers in Ontario are the subject of discrimination when it comes to employment insurance benefits. They are receiving fewer resources on a per capita basis than Canadians living in other parts of the country. That is not justifiable, it is not tenable and we need to continue to work together to put pressure on the federal government. I ask him to speak to his federal leader to ensure that he understands how important this is to Ontario workers.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** The federal budget came and went. Unemployed Ontario workers are still being short-changed. They receive far less in benefits than they should and those benefits aren't being paid out nearly as long as they should. How does the Premier explain the total failure of the so-called EI fairness campaign?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** It sounds like my friend is ready to give up on this. We're not.



We sometimes have to play the longer game. Not willingly, but that's just the nature of the animal when it comes to working with various federal governments. We are going to have to continue to collectively—and again, I urge my honourable colleague to speak to his federal leader and ask him to raise these kinds of issues in the House of Commons during question period. He has the possibility there to introduce a resolution, a private member's bill or other kinds of initiatives to ensure that that decision, which has to be made in the House of Commons in Ottawa, stands to the benefit of Ontario workers. I ask my colleague to keep working in that regard.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Thank you for the kind words, Premier. However this failure, whether it be federal or provincial, is being felt across our province. In London, EI claims have jumped 75.5%; Windsor posted a 61% increase in EI claims; Kitchener, a 51% increase; and Hamilton, my city, a 42% increase. At the root of the problem are the hundreds of thousands of good-paying jobs that have been lost in Ontario in recent months due to the absence of any sort of jobs strategy from the government. Will the Premier now admit that not only is the EI fairness campaign a failure, but that he has made it worse by having no jobs plan to put Ontario back to work?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Well, now we part company. What my honourable colleague is saying is that he doesn't support our five-point plan. What he's saying is that he doesn't support those billions of dollars we've invested in new schools, new hospitals, new roads, new bridges, new public transit and new border infrastructure, and the thousands and thousands of jobs that is creating and putting people to work right now. The investment we continue to make in strengthening our workforce, the 11,000 more kids who are graduating from high school every year; he doesn't support that. Fifty thousand more apprentice trainees; he doesn't support those. A hundred thousand more young people in colleges and universities; he doesn't support those. That's all part of our five-point plan. We continue to move on that and we look forward to building on it through our budget.

1050

## GREEN POWER GENERATION

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** To the Premier: The Green Energy Act sets no timelines or targets for increasing renewable energy in Ontario. Despite the rhetoric of transformation, the government is continuing its go-slow approach to green energy. Under this government's plan, come 2027, Ontario will still have less wind power than Texas has today and less than one fifth the solar panels Germany puts in in one year.

Greenpeace, the Ontario Clean Air Alliance, the David Suzuki Foundation and the World Wildlife Fund all say that unless the government increases its targets for

renewable energy, the Green Energy Act will be a green-wash. When will the government set serious targets for renewable energy to match your green rhetoric?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** I want to thank the honourable member for his question, and I want to ask him one in return, as we'd like to hear from that party about their intentions with respect to the bill.

On the matter that the member has raised, I would say that he's quite off base on two points. Firstly, he references 2027. He's manufacturing something there. I don't know what it's a reference to, but it's certainly made up.

A characteristic of a feed-in tariff is not to associate it with targets or caps. Targets say what you're limiting. They don't say, "We encourage all investors to come forward with their projects in a variety of forms so we can take advantage of them." It says that we have a mindset, a limit, in terms of how much investment we're prepared to accept. The feed-in tariff model that we have adopted is inspired by Europe, where they did not suffer through the targets that the honourable member is referencing in this question.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** The main reason the government is stuck in neutral on renewable energy is that it has stubbornly committed to powering 50% of the grid through waste-producing, expensive, unsafe, new nuclear energy. With all that nuclear, there is simply no room on the grid for significant new renewable energy.

A study by professors at the Ivey School of Business says that the McGuinty government has failed to stimulate investment in green energy because of investor uncertainty about the government's long-term commitment to green energy. Why won't this government put green energy first in this province by enshrining in the act strong and long-term public targets for renewable energy?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** I do encourage the honourable member to absorb this point, because it's a matter of culture. If the honourable member wants to work in an environment that is about targets, those are about limits.

A feed-in tariff model, combined with the right to access to the grid and with certainty about regulation, is not about targets or limits; it's about creating certainty around the investor climate, that, "If you're willing to make the investment, we will buy it, we will connect it, and we will do so in a faster fashion than has ever been done before."

Where I do agree with the honourable member is that it's necessary to move forward promptly with a new model that sees substantial new investment in transmission and especially in creating the capacity for our local distribution companies, like Toronto Hydro, as an example, to have the capital resources and the encouragement to invest today in building a model of distributed generation which allows thousands of rooftops in the city of Toronto to come to life as electricity generators. This



is what the honourable member will see in the next month.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** It's not only environmental groups and professors who are criticizing the bill. Today in the *Toronto Star*, industry observers cast doubt on the government's claim that 50,000 new jobs will be created over three years. A former Ontario Hydro director called the jobs claim "a tall order." The government says that 20,000 jobs will be created in three years in transmission and distribution projects, but such projects can take up to 10 years to get going. Meanwhile, the government refuses to promise a minimum 60%-domestic-content measure as is used in Quebec.

I know the Premier loves the challenge; maybe you do, too. When will you show Ontarians how you came up with the figure of 50,000 jobs?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** A couple of points there. Firstly, yesterday in this House, the leader of that member's party talked about Quebec's domestic content and said that it was enshrined in legislation in Quebec, which is a fallacy. It has been done only through Quebec's procurement model. We have enshrined in the legislation and given ministerial directive capability for moving forward domestic content, which is related to legislation, a much stronger approach than Quebec has offered.

The honourable member obviously has not digested the bill from the standpoint of transmission. Embedded in the bill are efforts related to the Environmental Assessment Act to substantially expedite the capacity to build new transmission in this province, instead of the snail's pace which has been the norm.

With respect to building new transmission, this bill takes special steps to be able to move those projects forward, and I will move forward with a ministerial directive on distribution and transmission within one month.

#### STUDENT SAFETY

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** My question is to the education Premier. Premier, I have asked you and your Minister of Education repeatedly in this House to implement mandatory reporting and protect the young victims who are bullied and abused in your schools. Your solution is to throw money at this issue. It isn't just about money, Mr. Premier; it's about follow-through and protecting the victims who continue to feel threatened and unsafe in your schools as the bullying and abuse continues unchecked.

Premier, can you tell the growing number of victims of student-on-student violence in Ontario schools why they continue to be ignored by the system and left to fend for themselves in fear in the midst of your inaction and rhetoric on this issue?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'm not sure I agree with all the language used by my honourable colleague, but she's on to something. There is a real issue here and I think

that all of our kids have the right to go to school and to feel safe and to be safe. And all parents have the right to drop their kids off at school or send them through the buses, whether it's elementary or high school, in particular, and to enjoy that sense of comfort and security from knowing that the kids are okay at school. I understand and I believe my honourable colleague supports that.

The fact is that we have been moving in this regard. We have, through our improved Safe Schools Act, by legislation we introduced, included the first-ever penalties for bullying. We have new programs in place for expelled students who might be caught up in that. I can also tell my honourable colleague that we intend to move this spring with more legislation, and I think it will speak specifically to the issue that she's raising here today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** I'm talking specifically about administrative follow-through. Premier, when I last raised this question, there were five people in the gallery; now, there are many more than five, because the number of students who feel unsafe in your schools is growing unchecked on your watch. Your schools are not doing everything they should be to keep these young victims safe. In fact, they make it adversarial and confrontational when parents try to protect their children from student-on-student violence and abuse, and unfortunately, they are failing to prevent continued bullying and abuse.

Premier, it's time to open your eyes and see the hurt and the fear in these children. They're experiencing this and their families feel powerless to stop it. How many more children and families must suffer before you finally address this issue of mandatory reporting in a substantive way?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I say to my colleague that we do intend to move forward with that particular aspect of improvement to the Safe Schools Act this spring. We will be introducing a bill in that regard.

I must say as well that we have been moving forward in other areas. In addition to that change that we made to the legislation, to the Safe Schools Act, to include the first-ever penalties for bullying, we have also trained some 25,000 teachers and 7,500 principals on the matter of bullying, how to recognize it and how to address it.

I want to take the opportunity as well to say something beyond this, which is that we will do everything we can as a government, collectively, to find a way to better address this issue in our schools, but it's also incumbent upon parents to take an interest in the activities of their children. Whether they either are being victimized or they are maybe caught up in something which is a negative activity, I'm saying we all have a role to play in this. We have done something and we will do more in this House.

#### POVERTY

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Minister of Children and Youth Services, your 25 in 5 bill is more like a five in 25 plan.



It will be framework legislation with no specific targets, no specific actions, no specific commitments. The government's own 25 in 5 plan won't even be in the legislation. When will this government finally stop grandstanding on poverty and start raising the minimum wage above the poverty line, reducing the wait-lists for affordable housing and child care, and rolling out the full Ontario child benefit today, rather than in 2011?

11100

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm really delighted that I will be introducing legislation this afternoon that will enshrine an ongoing commitment to poverty reduction.

We did release our 25 in 5 plan in December. I'm very proud of the work that we have done and that we are committed to doing in the future. We are committed to reducing poverty, to reducing the number of kids living in poverty by 25% over the next five years. But we know that's just the first step. We know that we need an ongoing commitment to poverty reduction. The legislation that we'll be introducing this afternoon, and that I hope you will support, will commit future governments to continue to work on reducing poverty in this province.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Ontarians can only conclude one thing: that the McGuinty Liberals would rather pay lip service to the poor than to actually help them. At a time when more people are falling into poverty every day, there will be nothing in the government's legislation to lessen the burden for these people—no plan, no strategy, absolutely nothing. What use is a poverty plan that has no plan? Indeed, the only thing you can say about it is, it's really poor. What use is it?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I simply don't share the member's pessimism. I actually am very encouraged by the steps that we have taken and that we are committed to taking. I'm especially proud that future governments will continue the work that we have started.

Just as an example, let me tell you what we have already accomplished with the work to date. When we were elected in 2003, a single mom with two kids working a full year at a full-time job had an income of under \$20,000. When our strategy is fully implemented, even without any new federal investments, her income will have gone up by 54%. That's over \$10,000 in the pockets of that family.

#### ONTARIO FILM AND TELEVISION INDUSTRY

**Ms. Laurel C. Broten:** My question is for the Minister of Culture. My riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore has the benefit of having important economic clusters in many sectors, including small manufacturing, printing, small business retail, and film and television production. In particular, film and television production is an important economic driver in Etobicoke–Lakeshore, yet this industry has suffered and declined in recent years. As a result, it is imperative that the government play an important role in promoting Ontario as a premier location

for film production through financial incentives and programs. Minister, what is our government doing to help Ontario's film and television industry remain competitive with other jurisdictions during these challenging economic times?

**Hon. M. Aileen Carroll:** The McGuinty government understands, indeed, that this is a challenging time for Ontario's film and television industry. So in order to help that industry and help them remain competitive in this tough economic climate, our government is proposing to make our increased production tax credits permanent. This will give businesses the certainty that they need for investment and for planning. If passed, domestic film productions will continue to be eligible for the 35% tax credit and foreign for the 25%. These are very competitive rates vis-à-vis other jurisdictions. Indeed, such financial incentives will combine with our world-renowned creative talent, our technical expertise and all of our wonderful first-class facilities to ensure that Ontario remains a key film production centre here in Canada and abroad.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Laurel C. Broten:** I'm certainly encouraged to hear that the government is taking such a strong and proactive position on this important matter. With three new productions underway or set to start in Etobicoke–Lakeshore as we speak, the film and television industry is key to the economic health of my community, and of course to that of many regions in Toronto and across the province.

Another current challenge that film productions face is securing funding for early-stage development activities, including scriptwriting, concept and story development. In these tough economic times it's even more crucial for our film industry to secure early funding so they can develop marketable products. Minister, can you tell this House what the government is doing to better support Ontario companies seeking to attract financing and attempting to bring their projects closer to production?

**Hon. M. Aileen Carroll:** I thank the honourable member for her insight and understanding of what this industry does for the province and how it impacts on her riding.

This industry contributes \$671 million to our economy, or did so last year, and we understand the real competitive advantage that film production and screen-based industries give to our economy. Consequently, the government just recently provided \$2 million to those important industries through the screen-based content initiative, administered by the Ontario Media Development Corp. This funding is supporting the work of 49 Ontario companies as they create marketable entertainment for this country and the world, just exactly the kind of smart investment a smart government should be making.

The government understands that to lead the way by investing in these industries, that this is vital to the ongoing transition of our—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.



## SKILLS TRAINING

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, and it concerns the Second Career program. Ernest Kiss is a constituent of mine from Collingwood who is looking to be retrained in business. He registered and qualified for retraining under the Second Career program, but the day before classes began, Mr. Kiss received a phone call from your ministry indicating that he no longer qualified for the program because, apparently, the course level he chose was too high for the level of job he was seeking, even though he knows of others who have received funding for the very same course. We talked to him yesterday and he told us, "It's like they're trying to do everything but help you get a job." Mr. Kiss wants to take the course and get back into the workforce. Minister, why won't you let him do that?

**Hon. John Milloy:** I appreciate the concern the honourable member has for his constituent. As is always the case, if any member brings forward a case, I'd be very happy to look into it and get back to him with the details on it.

The fact is, through Employment Ontario, we have a variety of services which are available to those who are looking for a job, such as my friend's constituent. Through Employment Ontario, we serve about 900,000 people a year for a variety of training programs, both short term and long term. There are certain eligibility requirements for both of them. But I'm pleased to report to the House that we've seen 6,300 people come forward for Second Career. We've seen about 9,000 people come forward for short-term training since June. At the same time, we're working with literally tens of thousands of other Ontarians who need support in finding employment.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Minister, I'll send Mr. Kiss's letter over to you so you can look into it.

In the meantime, let me tell you about another case. Ben Gaston of Alliston, also in my riding, has applied to the Second Career program for a six-month gasfitter's training course at Hi-Mark Occupational Skills Training Centre in Barrie, which is an accredited training provider for the Technical Standards and Safety Authority.

Ben is already qualified as a sheet metal worker and with his gasfitter's certificate he'll be able to get a job in six months, but your ministry has said no. They won't let him go to Hi-Mark, even though it's accredited by an agency of the government of Ontario. Instead, your officials are telling him he has to spend the next two years at Humber College, when all he needs is a six-month certificate to get a job and get back into the workforce.

These are two examples of what thousands of Ontarians are going through when they try to get into your Second Career program. Why won't you cut the red tape, recognize the Hi-Mark training centre and help Mr. Gaston get a job?

**Hon. John Milloy:** I think the member appreciates the fact that I can't stand here and, on the basis of a 30-

second question, give an analysis of the situation he's raising. I'd be happy to look into it.

I reject the premise of his question. He says thousands of Ontarians are finding obstacles in moving forward with Second Career. The fact of the matter is, we've seen 6,300 people come forward, and let me share stories with the Legislature. Violet, a young, single parent, was laid off as a packer at a local plant. Second Career is helping her attend the construction techniques program at Conestoga College. This course will give Violet the credit she needs to complete her general education diploma and enable her to complete the math course that's a pre-requisite to apprenticeship.

Let me tell the House about Zoltan, a young man I met, who was laid off after working 16 years at a plant in Oakville. Zoltan's previous studies, combined with some work experience in the electronics field, made him an ideal candidate for Mohawk College—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## INFECTIOUS DISEASE CONTROL

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** The question is to the Attorney General. We recently learned that the government of Ontario blew 23.4 million bucks to get a judgment for \$3.5 million. How many millions of dollars is this government going to spend fighting SARS victims, including 53 health care workers?

1110

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Of course SARS was a terrible tragedy in so many areas, and we will never forget those who suffered and never forget the lessons that we have learned as a result of it. There has been ongoing litigation. All those matters are before the courts. In fact, there is an appeal of a procedural step that both parties are appealing.

But there have been a lot of lessons learned out of the terrible SARS tragedy, and I know in the subsequent questions, my colleague the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care will want to speak to some of the steps that have been taken to make sure that when infection tragedies strike, we are so much better positioned to deal with them than we were in the past.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** You see, we're talking about the people who were victims of SARS, including 53 health care workers, who look for nothing more than fair compensation for their losses. Rather than lining the pockets of lawyers, why doesn't this Attorney General take his own counsel, apologize, sit down, and negotiate a fair settlement instead of creating huge legal fees for all the parties?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** To the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

**Hon. David Caplan:** In June 2004, our government released Operation Health Protection, a three-year action plan to revitalize our public health system. The third and final year of the plan has ended, and significant work has



been accomplished under each of the plan's six strategic priorities. For the information of the House, we have created the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion. We have renewed public health in numerous ways and, I would submit to you, implemented the recommendations of the Campbell report and increased the share of funding for mandatory programs from the previous low levels to 75%. We've enhanced health emergency management by creating the emergency management unit, a dedicated branch of the public health division. We've enhanced community and infection control of communicable disease by establishing the PIDAC, the Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee, and 14 infectious control networks. We have implemented—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

### MUNICIPALITIES

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Minister, this week over 1,000 municipal representatives from across Ontario representing rural and urban communities gathered in Toronto for the Ontario Good Roads Association and Rural Ontario Municipal Association joint conference. I know that local representatives of my home city and the minister's, Ottawa, were in attendance throughout the conference. There have been a number of speeches, delegation meetings with ministers and ministers' forums Tuesday afternoon. The representatives at the conference are looking for ways that they can assist their communities through these troubled economic times. They are sharing with each other best practices and looking to the province for guidance to ensure their cities and towns come out stronger than ever.

Could the minister please report to the House the details of the how the OGRA/ROMA conference went?

**Hon. Jim Watson:** I thank the honourable member from Ottawa—Orléans. It was a very constructive conference the last three days, as over 1,300 delegates from rural Ontario joined with close to 15 cabinet colleagues and parliamentary assistants. The Premier really set the tone and was very well received by the delegates, receiving, by the way, a standing ovation as a result of his commitment to infrastructure for rural Ontario, his commitment to ensure that red tape would be cut and that we would fast-track initiatives like environmental assessment for public transit and fast track green energy projects.

We were also particularly pleased to meet with the eastern and western wardens; we had some very good discussions and dialogues with those individuals. We're particularly pleased to highlight some of the significant historic record investment in infrastructure in rural Ontario. We're there for—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Thank you, Minister, for that. I know that in your speech you gave examples of the

innovative solutions being used by Ontario municipalities to not only meet today's economic realities but respond to the environmental challenges that we are all facing. In order for innovations like these and others to continue, we need to assist municipalities as best we can to provide all communities, small and large, with the support they need.

On a number of occasions, I have heard from municipal leaders about the costs they incur because of court security that they are providing not only to their own residents but for surrounding municipalities in their regions. Could the minister please tell the House how our government, and his ministry in particular, is reducing the financial burden on municipalities, especially rural municipalities?

**Hon. Jim Watson:** I'm very pleased to answer the honourable member's question. When we sat down with AMO and the city of Toronto, the Minister of Finance and I talked about a long-term, principled approach to uploading.

After years of disastrous downloading by the previous Tory government, this government is in the business of partnering and treating our municipal partners with respect. That's why we have already uploaded the Ontario drug plan. We are uploading ODSP. We've brought funding up to the public—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Please continue.

**Hon. Jim Watson:** I know the Tories are upset because their leader, for the first time in a decade, didn't get a standing ovation from ROMA when he spoke to the delegates, including members of his own caucus.

Let me continue: Kawartha Lakes, \$11.2 million; the good people of Northumberland—Investing in Ontario—\$1 million; Quinte West, \$4 million; Peterborough, \$7.1 million—

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Point of order.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. I'm not going to accept the point of order. It's understood we don't raise points of order during question period.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I was trying to make the point that the minister should—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** No. Do you remember former Deputy Speaker Mr. Johnson talking about two people standing at once?

New question.

### DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. I know this week he was as concerned as me and every other member from Ottawa when we learned that 90% of the patients at the Ottawa Hospital were waiting at least 360 days for an MRI. That's 12 times the provincial target, which was set by your government at 28. I need to know, how could you have let this happen?

The Champlain LHIN CEO has indicated we can get out of this mess if we streamline all of the MRI wait-lists



in the city of Ottawa. He also indicated that we need anywhere between one to three new MRIs.

So my question to you, Minister: Have you contacted the CEO of our LHIN and our local hospitals to work on streamlining those lists, and more importantly, when will one, two or even three new MRIs hit the city of Ottawa so we can make sure that those people waiting for an MRI get it in a timely manner?

Thank you for your—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister?

**Hon. David Caplan:** I do want to thank the member for the question, because this is a serious matter—having people in Ottawa and eastern Ontario have access to important diagnostic services.

In fact, I was in Ottawa. I had a chance to be hosted by Dr. Cushman at the LHIN office to meet in a round-table format with hospital and CCAC officials and others interested in this issue in particular. I can report to the member that three MRI machines have been placed into Ottawa: one at the Queensway Carleton Hospital, one at the Ottawa Hospital, and one at the Montfort Hospital. In fact, they have recently come into service. The data is older data, and you will see, as we move forward, that those wait-lists are coming down. In fact, across the province, wait times for MRIs, while there is still much more work to do, have come down 22%.

I do thank the—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** Last summer, Dr. Alan Hudson, leader of Ontario's wait times strategy, said that our Champlain LHIN, which includes Ottawa, had the longest waiting lists in the province in a whole number of areas, including MRIs. The Premier, in response to this disastrous report for Ottawa, said that wait times for MRIs had gone down 37%. Does that mean that wait times last summer were 500 days? Does it mean that wait times were much less last summer and much higher now?

We have three cabinet ministers in this Legislature from the Ottawa area, including the Premier. When are you going to do your job, as ministers, and get this problem fixed for Ottawa and eastern Ontario? Health services wait times are longer in the Premier's city—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. David Caplan:** This is a member who presided over the closure of the Riverside Hospital and the Grace hospital and attempted to close the Montfort Hospital. I think it's rather surprising that he would come into this House—in fact, since 2003 we've almost doubled the number of MRI exams per year in the—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Please continue.

1120

**Hon. David Caplan:** As I was saying, since 2003, when the member was on this side of the House, we have almost doubled the number of MRI exams per year in the province of Ontario, from more than 276,000 to over 560,000 procedures. I would add that if this member

were to be allowed to implement his program of another \$3-billion cut to our health care system, I shudder to think what the good people of Ottawa and Ontario would experience: further health care cuts under this member's—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. The member for Nickel Belt.

## SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

### FRENCH-LANGUAGE SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour le ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée.

La communauté francophone est inquiète du manque de nouvelles face au processus d'engagement de la communauté francophone envers les réseaux locaux d'intégration des services de santé, les RLIS. Les francophones sont fortement opposés à la création de comités aviseurs des services de santé en français pour les RLIS. J'aimerais savoir quand le ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée a l'intention de faire rapport aux francophones de l'Ontario à ce sujet.

**Hon. David Caplan:** I do thank the member for the question, because I have instructed the ministry and they are well aware that while the LHINs must engage their public's local leaders, there are two very special and important kinds of engagements which need to happen of a constitutional and a fundamental nature. One, of course, is with our First Nations people. The other, of course, is with the francophone community in the province of Ontario. That's why we posted for comment for the francophone community a proposed regulation. We have gone through that period of consultation and received considerable feedback. I am working with an advisory committee which has been struck and is traditionally providing advice to the Minister of Health and working with my colleague the minister of francophone affairs to be able to ensure that that engagement of our francophone community in the provision of health care service is provided.

I welcome any constructive—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Je suis heureuse d'entendre que le ministre reconnaît que le processus d'engagement a besoin d'être mis en place et que quelqu'un y travaille. Mais ce qu'il ne reconnaît pas, c'est qu'il y a un consensus à même la communauté francophone que, dans le court terme, on aimerait voir les réseaux des services de santé en français assumer ce rôle. Il y a un consensus au niveau de la communauté francophone elle-même, et la ministre déléguée aux services en français a reçu des centaines de courriels qui vont dans le même sens.

Donc, on se demande, pourquoi le délai? Pourquoi est-ce qu'il faut continuer d'attendre? Il y a un consensus. Mettons ce modèle d'engagement de la communauté francophone en place même si le comité veut continuer. Mais les RLIS font leur travail en ce moment. Ils



prennent des décisions qui ont un impact sur la vie des francophones pendant que les francophones n'ont pas un processus d'engagement en place. Quand est-ce qu'on va l'avoir ?

**Hon. David Caplan:** Well, as the member points out in her question, there is not one view in the francophone community; there are many. The francophone community is quite diverse in the province of Ontario and exists throughout the entire geography of the province. There are needs, whether that would be in Niagara or in northern Ontario, in eastern Ontario or in the southwest.

This government takes the time to listen to the constructive suggestions of members of the francophone community. I would say to the member opposite that if she too has constructive ideas, we would very much welcome her suggestions. I have not heard any in her comments today, but she would be very free to forward any of those particular ideas and ways that we can strengthen the engagement between local health integration networks and members of the francophone community in order to be able to provide French-language services appropriately to members of the community in a way that would be beneficial to them.

We are going to work and continue—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** My question is for the Minister of Health. Minister, in the summer of 2003, I made a commitment to provide enhanced cardiac services in my riding of Thunder Bay—Atikokan and for all of northwestern Ontario. While our Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre provides world-class care in many areas, we had never been able to receive angioplasty services in our region. As a result, thousands of patients from northwestern Ontario have had to leave our region and fly to Ottawa, Toronto or Hamilton for this procedure. This would place a great deal of strain on the patient and the family of the patient, and in some cases result in a death where the patient was not able to reach the southern Ontario destination in time. Many families were unable to accompany their loved ones for financial reasons, making an already difficult situation even worse.

Minister, can you please provide this House with an update on the progress that has been made with regard to the provision of angioplasty services at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre in Thunder Bay, to the benefit of all of northwestern Ontario?

**Hon. David Caplan:** I want to thank the member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan. I would also acknowledge the incredible work that my colleague Minister Gravelle has done to advocate for continued improvement to health care in northern Ontario.

I am pleased to share with the member and inform him that we're making good on the commitment that he had the pleasure to announce back in 2003. Earlier this month, we announced that this government is investing

\$8 million in a new angioplasty suite at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre.

Northern Ontario has one of the highest rates of cardiac disease in the province. Over the past year, about 450 people from the region had to be transferred to other hospitals in Ontario to receive this angioplasty procedure.

When it's up and running in 2010-11, Thunder Bay's new angioplasty suite will be able to perform 550 procedures per year. This will make life easier for patients and their families, especially in northwestern Ontario, because they will—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Thank you very much, Minister, for that answer. I know that the constituents in my riding of Thunder Bay—Atikokan will be very pleased to know that we are now expanding the services there that have been running for two years.

Still, given that the new angioplasty suite will not be able to fully accommodate 550 patients until 2010-11, some of the people who require angioplasty will still have to travel to southern Ontario hospitals in the meantime, and the cost of travelling can be very high. I ask the minister: What is our government going to do to help to defray the costs that northern Ontario patients have to pay when they have to travel to receive OHIP-insured services?

**Hon. David Caplan:** When we don't have the services available close to home in northern Ontario, I'm glad to tell the member that more than 880,000 northern Ontario residents qualify for the northern Ontario travel grant. We process an average of 155,000 applications each and every year.

I want you to know that our government is committed to improving this program. That's why we raised the northern health travel grant mileage rate by 19.7% to 41 cents per kilometre; that's why we implemented an accommodation allowance. We want to help patients who have to travel more than 200 kilometres to pay for a place to stay, if that's needed.

We've come a long way with this program, but we need to recognize that there's more to do to improve the reimbursement time frame. The northern health travel grant enhancement project is on track, I say to the member, to reduce application processing time and to further reduce claim processing time, and the ministry is currently working on—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

#### FOREST INDUSTRY

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. Minister, as you're well aware, the forestry sector has been devastated in the province of Ontario, but certain areas in the forestry sector have been actively pushing for changes to energy spot market sales so that they could further shut down their mills and sell energy, for those which own dams, rather than run their mills.



Shutting down mills will put a lot more of the people out of work than just the people who work in the mills—the cutters in the forest and the haulers, just to name a few. Minister, how can the Green Energy Act, in relation to the spot market sales, support the forestry sector in the ailing environment it is in?

**Hon. Donna H. Cansfield:** I thank the member for the question. I would suspect that this is an example of a mill where the mill and the dam work in synergy. There are a number of mills that in fact do that. One of the opportunities that the mill has is that it can have its production at night, it can store its pulp, and then it can go for demand-response and work with the IESO, the independent system operator, in order to receive some dollars for that demand-response.

That's very much what many of these different mills and dams have been doing. It has been part of our responsibility to work with them, not only on the spot market, but they also can become totally independent through cogeneration. That's why we gave Abitibi, as an example, \$20 million for their boiler in Fort Frances-Rainy River, of which they've drawn down \$17 million. It's moving forward on a cogeneration project—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** Minister, selling on the spot market could effectively mean that, "In 15 minutes, you're going to be out of work for four hours." How can that be effective in working in the forestry sector so that these individuals have job security?

1130

One of the key areas, when you're talking about job security, is the mill at Iroquois Falls. I know a great number of individuals are concerned in that area, not only at the mill, but also in the surrounding communities, that the sale of that mill could be directly as a result of the inability to sell on the spot market and they're trying to circumvent the system. What this could mean is that the mill could be sold and then the focus would be on selling energy as opposed to providing energy for the mill and the local community.

Will the government commit to ensuring, by buying that mill at Iroquois Falls, that the energy produced at that mill will stay there to support the local communities?

**Hon. Donna H. Cansfield:** I have absolutely nothing in front of me from AbitibiBowater with respect to Iroquois Falls. At such time as I do, we'll look at the options that are available to us.

You and I both know that AbitibiBowater is under extraordinary pressure worldwide. It has a significant deficit, \$6 billion, a billion that must be paid this year, and they're looking to all of their options.

In the mill in question, they run 24/7 and they work at night. They store their pulp so they can go on the spot market as demand requires it. At first, they thought it was going to be a couple of times a year, and it's maybe up to four or five times a year. That's a plus for any mill, not a minus. They're able to do both: produce, and at the same time help us in terms of the spot market.

What's more important around the green energy is the opportunity to become self-sufficient in another way, through bio-energy—for example, pelletization—or using the biomass in a different way—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. The member for Parkdale-High Park.

## MINERAL EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** To the Minister of Northern Development and Mines: NDP candidate Lyn Edwards has heard from many residents of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock who are worried about uranium exploration in their area. They're concerned about the future effects of open-pit uranium mining, such as tonnes of low-level radioactive tailings, contaminated soil and groundwater, and long-term impacts on the local watershed and the farm and recreational land it supplies.

Before exploration heats up and quickly turns to mining, will you commit to commissioning a study to comprehensively examine the health and ecological impacts of uranium exploration and mining?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** As the member will know, we are in the process of going through a modernization of the Mining Act, and we've had a number of consultations which have wrapped up. Discussions involved trying to find a real balance between maintaining a positive investment climate for the mining sector and also properly respecting First Nation communities and others.

In terms of the issues related to uranium, they have been part of the discussion that people have brought up; it's not actually part of the scope of our discussion. We recognize that as a result of our need for nuclear power in the province—and radioisotopes—the exploration is not going forward in that regard. There are many discussions about it. We have opened up the discussions to it. When we had our session, for example, in Kingston, it became a real area of discussion.

I must tell you that we are keen to move forward with a positive result, and we're committed to bringing forward our legislation on the Mining Act in this spring session.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock is an ecological gem and residents are worried about the long-term impacts of uranium exploration and mining, as I said before, on the watershed and natural environment. Studying this impact is a thoughtful and reasonable request from the very people who are most affected. Why won't you today, in this House, commit to commissioning a study to comprehensively examine the health and ecological impacts of uranium exploration and mining?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** Again, in terms of the scope of our review of the Mining Act, we brought forward a very clear discussion paper in terms of the issues that were there. We encouraged discussion of all areas, and that became part of it.



As the member would know well, in terms of the future, in any exploration that takes place, perhaps one in 10,000 would end up producing a mine. The fact is that as a result of the fact that we do need to maintain the possibilities in terms of our need for nuclear power, our possibilities in terms of radioisotopes, those discussions are there.

We welcome a discussion in terms of our Mining Act consultations. We have done that throughout the process. We look forward to moving forward on what we think will be a very positive piece of legislation later this spring.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The time for question period has ended. There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1135 to 1500.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'd like to introduce Richard Wall, who is a student from the University of Akron, Ohio, who is actually from Tillsonburg, Ontario. He's in fourth-year political science at University of Akron in Ohio and part of the internship program. I'd like to welcome him to the Legislature. He'll be with me until May of this year.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Not that the Speaker should be participating in debate, but I think the record should be corrected that he's actually from Port Burwell in the great riding of Elgin-Middlesex-London. If you ever want some great cherries, visit his mother and father's farm. They've got the best sweet cherries going.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I have no quarrel with the Speaker promoting the cherries from that part of the Ontario, but I suggest he bring some to the chamber come cherry season next late summer if he indeed is going to do that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I will keep that in mind.

Introductions?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to mention that Jack Doris from Peterborough, a former mayor, with 40 years of municipal service, is here today; Paul Ayotte, who's the current mayor of Peterborough and was a classmate of mine some five or 10 years ago—maybe 50 years ago—and Eric Martin. They are visiting us here today and visiting Jeff Leal from Peterborough as well.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### NORTHERN ECONOMY

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It's all news all the time.

I would like to comment: This morning the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Mr. Watson, had kind of a lob-ball question thrown at him, talking about ROMA

and the good roads conference on Monday and Tuesday of this week. I'd like to assure the House that our leader, John Tory, met with the leaders of rural and northern Ontario. He met with the eastern wardens, he met with the western wardens, he met with the northern Ontario wardens and the FONOM group, the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities.

I can assure you, Mr. Speaker—and the minister, for the record here, that we didn't hear quite the optimism that the minister would have had the House believe. I wouldn't use the term "misleading." But I would like to say that what I did hear, for the record, is that they're very, very concerned about the economy in northern Ontario, much of which is failed policy from the McGuinty government. They talked about the tragedy of the pulp and paper industry, the mining industry, and now we have the Mining Act under review—another piece of red tape to make the economy even worse. They talked about the lack of infrastructure funding. They don't have the one third because these are communities with populations of 6,000 and potentially less. They talked about the mess they've made of health care in northern Ontario. They've talked about the role of the LHINs, which is really masking the real problem of cutting services in small-town Ontario. I can say the same thing in my own riding: It's anything but what the minister said today—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

### MOPAR CANADIAN NATIONALS

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** Every weekend, from Victoria Day to Labour Day, thousands of tourists travel to Grand Bend in the northwest part of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex. Everyone has a different reason for going there. Some come to relax at the beach or at the cottage; some go camping at Pinery Park or other campgrounds we have there. Then we have our race fans who come to visit the Grand Bend Motorplex.

This summer, from July 17 to 19, Grand Bend Motorplex will host the 10th annual Mopar Canadian Nationals. As one of only two national events held in Canada each year, Mopar Canadian Nationals will draw over 450 participating teams and 35,000 race fans from across North America, including people who travel from BC and Texas. The enthusiasm of race fans makes this event one of the largest race weekends sponsored by the International Hot Rod Association.

The competition will feature the "fastest cars on earth," which have top fuel dragsters, which travel at over 320 miles per hour. There will also be "wild pro modified" cars, low six-second mountain motor stock cars, funny car matches and other things. Fans can take a chance to cheer on local racers, including Rob Atchison, the three-time International Hot Rod Association champion, and Paul Noakes, last year's second-place winner, as they race around on their home track.

I encourage everyone to travel to Grand Bend this July and visit one of Canada's premier racing facilities, the Grand Bend Motorplex, and take in the excitement of the Mopar Canadian Nationals.



## ARBORISAN WOOD CRAFT

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** I rise today to offer my best wishes to a family in my riding who are starting a small business venture. In these tough economic times, it's a great pleasure to be able to stand in this place and share a good-news story.

Bill and Heather Colls have really rocked in the Kanata economy and community. Heather and Bill started the Kanata food bank some time ago, which now flourishes, but now they have, along with their son, Geoffrey, started Arborisan Wood Craft in November. Based in Stittsville, they produce wooden lawn and garden furniture and sell it online. The English garden and Adirondack-style furniture are available as kits or fully assembled. Pictures of their products can be found on their website at [www.arborisanwoodcraft.com](http://www.arborisanwoodcraft.com), and I understand a complete catalogue will be online soon.

I hope residents of Ottawa, eastern Ontario and all of Ontario will support this local new business. Unfortunately, I was not able to be at the official opening of their production facility last Friday, but I plan to visit it very soon.

In the meantime, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate two great citizens of Kanata and the west part of Ottawa, Bill and Heather Colls, and their son Geoffrey. I wish them every success in their new business.

# NIAGARA PENINSULA CHILDREN'S CENTRE

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** The Niagara Peninsula Children's Centre down in south St. Catharines provides incredibly important services for the youngest of our residents: diagnostic and rehabilitative and therapeutic work. I've been there and I've seen some of the tremendous things they do. They identify and work with infant hearing problems; they work with language disorders, speech disorders; they have orthopedic, developmental pediatrics and pediatric clinics; they have specialized programs like casting and splinting and gait analysis. These are incredibly important things because all of us here know full well that the earlier you get to detect and respond to these things, the more effective that response is going to be.

The problem is that, unlike hospitals and schools, the Niagara Peninsula Children's Centre is not receiving the modest inflationary increases in the funds provided by the government. They're going to be short \$200,000 over the course of this ending fiscal year and the beginning of next year's. That means that three to four staff are going to have to be laid off and that means that already lengthy waiting lists for these kids are going to become longer.

It's not a huge amount of money. I'm calling upon this Minister of Finance to ensure that the Niagara Peninsula Children's Centre receives that modest inflationary increase in their funding. Two hundred thousand dollars are going to serve a whole lot of kids and save a whole lot of them from ugly waiting lists.

## SIEMENS CANADA

**Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis:** On January 8 of this year, I had the opportunity to visit Siemens, a rotor production and engine assembly facility in Hamilton. With over 45 years of experience in building gas turbines in Hamilton, Siemens has established an important place for itself in our city and worldwide.

Siemens' contribution to Hamilton can be seen both within its facilities and throughout our community. During my tour I was amazed at how technical, complex and efficient the process was to construct these large turbines. The high-efficiency, low-emission turbine produced in Hamilton and used throughout the world is a great example of Siemens' commitment to excellence in its field.

Siemens is an important part of ensuring that our local economy remains diversified and connected to the global economy. They also have a very strong record of volunteerism within our community. They are dedicated to improving the lives of Hamiltonians.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Brian Maragno, Craig Laviolette and Katie Walton, who made this tour possible, and for their continued dedication and great work in our city of Hamilton.

1510

## LITERACY AND BASIC SKILLS

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** My comments today are on the private member's resolution I'm going to be talking about tomorrow in the House, and I'm going to read it: "That, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should provide adequate funding to community-based literacy and basic skills programs so that the agencies can properly address the growing enrolment."

It's been a really interesting process to go through this over the last few weeks, talking to all the literacy councils, colleges and school boards about some of the issues we've got with literacy in our province. It's sort of the unknown and hidden issue that we probably don't want to face.

I understand there are almost 2.4 million people who are really unable to enter the future trades and future job market with the kind of literacy they have today. As well, we look at things like the Second Career program, which is having trouble getting people into it.

What we're finding, quite frankly, is that they need to get basic literacy before they can enter the Second Career program. When we lose 200,000 or 300,000 manufacturing jobs, there will be a lot more of these people coming on at a very humiliating time in their lives when they've lost their job and, at the same time, can't read and write properly or even do a resumé properly.

That's the intent of the resolution tomorrow. I look forward to debating it, and I hope that at the end of the day we can have full support of this House to provide more funding for literacy and basic skills.

## CRIME STOPPERS AWARDS

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It's a pleasure to rise in the House today. I want to tell you about some amazing Ontarians who have been honoured with top awards by Crime Stoppers International. Three of the top four awards announced worldwide by Crime Stoppers International went to Ontarians.

On February 19, Minister Bartolucci and I welcomed Sergeant Gary Gold, of Halton region, to Queen's Park to congratulate him on his Coordinator of the Year award. Sergeant Gold has implemented some extremely innovative projects to promote the program at high schools across Halton region.

Kedre Browne, a student volunteer with Toronto Crime Stoppers program, was awarded Student of the Year internationally, and Sharon Marunchak, a volunteer board member with the Sudbury Rainbow Centre Crime Stoppers program, was named Top Civilian of the Year.

We'd all like to send our sincere thanks out to these individuals and to everyone else across this province who is involved with this great organization. They work hard to ensure that our neighbourhoods and communities remain safe.

Since 1984, Ontario Crime Stoppers programs have been responsible for the arrest of 63,000 persons and the recovery of over \$780 million in stolen property and seized illicit narcotics. These recipients personify the true meaning of community safety, and our community should be indebted for the work these people do on our behalf.

## TOWNSHIP OF WOOLWICH

**Ms. Leeanna Pendergast:** Today, I rise in the House to highlight the township of Woolwich, the township in which I live in my riding of Kitchener—Conestoga.

Woolwich is Hockeyville. Woolwich is in the top five communities in Canada to be Hockeyville, and the last community in Ontario. So we need the help of all Ontarians to help Woolwich become Hockeyville.

Woolwich has a long tradition of hockey: St. Jacobs is the home of Darryl Sittler, and Elmira was the home of the late Dan Snyder.

We need Ontario to vote, and we need Ontario to vote often. There are three ways to vote: by phone, text or online. This is where it gets to be a little bit like Queen's Park Idol: You can text "votewoolwich" to 222111 or phone 1-866-533-8066 or go online to [www.woolwich-hockeyville.ca](http://www.woolwich-hockeyville.ca). Vote between February 28 and March 4.

Vote often, vote unlimited and please, we need Ontario to help bring Hockeyville back to Ontario.

## RIDINGS OF NORTHUMBERLAND— QUINTE WEST AND PETERBOROUGH

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** I'm honoured today to have the opportunity to welcome a vast array of businesses from my riding of Northumberland—Quinte West and from my

good friend Jeff Leal's riding of Peterborough. We've been keeping these treasures hidden for far too long and today we're sharing them with all of you.

To the mayors and councillors who are joining us from these municipalities, welcome to Queen's Park.

To all my friends here at Queen's Park, your staff and public service employees, I encourage you to join MPP Leal and me in committee rooms 228 and 230 this afternoon from 2:30 to 6:30. Prepare to have your day enriched.

Today is an opportunity to showcase our ridings and the wonderful things we have to offer, both in Northumberland—Quinte West and Peterborough. You will find award-winning cheese producers, wine manufacturers, representatives from the National Air Force Museum of Canada and 8 Wing Trenton, to name just a few. Take a moment to view the displays put on by our local tourism and economic development folks in Northumberland—Quinte West and Peterborough. I'm sure you'll find yourself wondering why you haven't taken the time to travel just a few miles east of the GTA to enjoy rich culture and deepen your appreciation for small-town business in Ontario.

I'd be remiss not to mention that our very own Mrs. Sonja Bata is here today. It is indeed a pleasure to be in her company.

I encourage everyone to come out and learn more about our special part of eastern Ontario and enjoy some of what we proudly can call home.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business, such that: Mr. Levac assumes ballot item number 75 on the list drawn on November 28, 2007, and Mr. Sorbara assumes ballot item number 56 on the list drawn on January 28, 2009.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### POVERTY REDUCTION ACT, 2009

### LOI DE 2009 SUR LA RÉDUCTION DE LA PAUVRETÉ

Ms. Matthews moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 152, An Act respecting a long-term strategy to reduce poverty in Ontario / Projet de loi 152, Loi concernant une stratégie à long terme de réduction de la pauvreté en Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The minister for a short statement.



**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I will defer that to ministerial statements.

## GREENBELT DAY ACT, 2009

### LOI DE 2009 SUR LE JOUR DE LA CEINTURE DE VERDURE

Mr. Dickson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 153, An Act to proclaim Greenbelt Day / Projet de loi 153, Loi proclamant le Jour de la ceinture de verdure.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** In February 2005, the original greenbelt legislation received royal assent. We currently stand without a day to commemorate this piece of legislation. If passed, this bill will proclaim February 28 in each year as Greenbelt Day in Ontario. This day will provide opportunities to raise awareness and appreciation of the benefits to our 1.8 million acres of protected greenbelt land in Ontario for present and future generations to share.

1520

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### POVERTY

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Today our government is proposing legislation which, if passed, would enshrine in law a long-term commitment to reducing poverty in Ontario.

In December, we launched Ontario's first-ever poverty reduction strategy, *Breaking the Cycle*. It's a comprehensive five-year plan that will reduce the number of children living in poverty by 25%. It will raise the standard of living of all children living in poverty in Ontario and lift 90,000 kids out of poverty altogether. It's a plan designed to break the cycle of poverty by improving opportunities for children and youth, especially when it comes to their education.

But a five-year strategy is not enough. It's a very good start, but if we're serious about reducing poverty and expanding opportunity for all Ontarians, we need a long-term, ongoing commitment that will extend beyond one government's mandate.

The proposed Poverty Reduction Act is that commitment. It means that Ontario would have both the immediate plan and the long-term commitment we need to reduce poverty for generations to come.

Some people may argue that this is not the time for poverty reduction, but we completely reject that argument. Now, more than ever, is the time to act, with purpose and with boldness and with vision. The fact is

that in order to emerge from this economic uncertainty that we are now experiencing, we are going to need everyone at their best, everyone contributing, everyone working together to build a stronger Ontario.

If passed, the Poverty Reduction Act would require future governments of Ontario to develop a renewed strategy with a specific target every five years. It would require the government to report annually on key indicators related to poverty and opportunity. These indicators would typically include income, school success, health and housing. It would mandate future governments to consult people living in poverty as they develop future strategies.

The proposed legislation requires that all future strategies be built on a shared vision, a vision of a province where every person has the opportunity to achieve his or her full potential in a prosperous and healthy Ontario.

Future strategies must be guided by the following seven principles: (1) that there's untapped potential in Ontario's population that needs to be drawn upon by building supports and eliminating barriers to full participation by all people in Ontario's economy and society; (2) that strong, healthy communities are an integral part of poverty reduction—that their potential must be brought to bear on the reduction of poverty; (3) that there must be a recognition of the heightened risk of poverty among groups such as immigrants, single mothers, people with disabilities, aboriginal peoples, and racialized groups; (4) that families be supported so that they can play a meaningful role in promoting opportunity; (5) that all people in Ontario, including those living in poverty, deserve to be treated with respect and with dignity; (6) that Ontarians, especially people living in poverty, are to be involved in the reduction of poverty; and, finally, (7) that we need a sustained commitment to work together to develop strong and healthy children, families and communities.

We are joined in the House today by some people in the gallery who have long fought the battle against the injustice of poverty. I would like to take a moment to recognize them and thank them for their advocacy. These are some of the extraordinary people who have fought to put poverty reduction on Ontario's agenda. The people here today and many, many others right across this province never gave up this fight. They never gave up hope for a better life for all Ontarians. I want to say thank you for having the courage and the tenacity to sustain this fight for social justice when it may have seemed to have been a futile effort. We would not be here without you. You have left a lasting legacy.

If passed, this legislation would enshrine our commitment that all partners continue to have a seat at the table, that everyone who is committed to reducing poverty and expanding opportunity in Ontario has a voice in that conversation. It is going to take all of us: all levels of government, the business community, the non-profit sector, everyone, all of us working together.

Ontarians have always drawn strength from the fact that this is a province of boundless opportunity. Ours is a



province where everyone has the chance to succeed regardless of where they start in life. The proposed Poverty Reduction Act would, if passed, ensure that we stay true to our best values in good times and in bad.

Thank you.

### BLACK HISTORY MONTH

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** I rise with great honour today to mark Black History Month. I speak today at a remarkable time in our history books. As the people of this great province and country celebrate Black History Month, it is important for all of us to understand and to reflect on the origins of this special month.

We reflect on the fact that Black History Month began as Negro History Week in 1926 in the United States through the work of African-American scholar Dr. Carter G. Woodson. We reflect on the fact that in the 1950s, community organizations such as the Canadian Negro Women's Association began to celebrate the importance of the history of the black community in Toronto. We reflect on the fact that Toronto became the first municipality in Canada to proclaim Black History Month through the efforts of great individuals and organizations such as the Ontario Black History Society.

Black History Month's aim is to recognize, to celebrate and to reflect on the immense contribution to society made by black slaves and how their enduring struggles have positively shaped our society. As we reflect on this journey, Black History Month is tremendously important to recognize and celebrate our men, our women, our mothers, our fathers, our sisters, our brothers, our daughters, our sons, our colleagues and our friends in the African-Canadian community for their contribution to society at large. Their accomplishments are entrenched in our country and our province's foundation. These individuals paved the way for equal rights and they are part of the reason we continue the journey and the fight for equality, liberty and freedom in all countries.

Black History Month is important to the province of Ontario and important for our youth, who can reflect on this month and not become complacent, but rather look forward to a future, a future that embodies a just society where opportunity and equality is available to everyone.

This past year we had much to celebrate with our neighbours to the south, with their election of an African American, Barack Obama, to the presidency of the United States of America. The election of President Obama builds on the vision that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had for our world.

As we cherish this moment of progress, let us not forget the battle we have fought and the future life of peace and harmony we seek for ourselves and for our children. In a country where we thrive on the riches of multiculturalism, we appreciate the individuals who long fought for equality, whose struggles and accomplishments teach us that any and all obstacles and limitations can be overcome, whether it is Rosa Parks, who refused to move to the back of the bus, or the hundreds of

thousands who gathered to hear Dr. Martin Luther King roar those memorable words, "I have a dream," or our own Daurene Lewis, who became the first African woman to be elected mayor in the entire continent of North America, or the first African-Canadian woman named Governor General, Her Excellency Michaëlle Jean, or the Honourable Jean Augustine, who introduced a motion in the House of Commons in 1995 to recognize Black History Month throughout our country.

All of them have moved us forward. They fought our battles and worked for our freedoms, and this month is a month to honour and pay our deepest gratitude to these individuals.

### 1530

Ontario has also had its share of heroes. One particular individual comes to mind. Not only was Leonard Braithwaite elected as the first black member of this Legislature; he also left a legacy within these corridors as he fought to give young females the right to serve as parliamentary pages.

As we celebrate Black History Month, I invite all Ontarians and members of this Legislature to remember yesterday and to show respect for today, and let us move forward with great hope and anticipation for an even better tomorrow.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Statements by the ministries? Responses?

### POVERTY

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** The minister began by referencing the goal of 90,000 children who would be lifted out of poverty, but I suggest that when you look at this bill today, not one single person will be lifted out of poverty by this piece of legislation.

It talks about a five-year cycle. In looking at this five-year cycle, let us consider that it takes one year for consultation and writing, and then there would be an annual report. Year two would obviously be done in planning and implementation of making those connections with agencies and so forth, and then an annual report. Year three and four might be the opportunity to have actual implementation, with annual reports, of course, coming with year three and year four. Then there's an election, and after an election, we have year five.

So I think you need to understand that, as a method of implementation, this is very heavy from the perspective of the paper process. It also leaves accountability to the government itself. There is nothing in there that suggests that there is any kind of peer or public consultation or evaluation. I would suggest that a committee of the Legislature or some other public process might be more in order than for the government to comment on itself.

Finally, I would just like to say that people in my riding would be much more impressed if the minister were making an announcement today about greater funding for literacy so that the constituents I represent who need that program would be able to qualify for GED or Second Career money. People in my riding would appre-



ciate equitable and sustainable funding for children's mental health. They would like to know more about that and those kinds of programs than about annual reports and a five-year reporting scheme.

### BLACK HISTORY MONTH

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** I rise today in celebration and in recognition of Black History Month. It is my hope as education critic that the proud history and contributions of these black citizens be incorporated into the curriculum in a more fulsome way.

Did you know that Harriet Tubman used the Salem Chapel in St. Catharines as the headquarters for the Underground Railroad? Or that the first meeting of the NAACP took place on the Ontario shore of Lake Erie, where they could meet without fear of persecution?

Ms. Sadlier, president of the Ontario Black History Society, has recently received the Order of Canada, and is a remarkable role model not only for our black youth but for all Ontarians who seek to make this province a better place to live.

As we work to create a balanced curriculum in our schools and raise our children to appreciate the diverse culture that thrives in our communities, we should think about including more black history in our curriculum. We need to ensure that these efforts are being made every day, not just in the month of February.

The year 2009 is an exemplary year to celebrate the accomplishments of the black community in North America with the election of the first black president of the United States. We here in Ontario have many role models from which to choose, Lincoln Alexander, who walked the halls for many years, being one of our greats.

I congratulate the efforts of all who have worked so hard to share the stories and accomplishments with all Ontarians during the 2009 Black History Month. I look forward to hosting a celebration tomorrow at a black history event here in Queen's Park.

### BLACK HISTORY MONTH

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I want to thank all members of the House for their support of the private member's bill that Maria Van Bommel and I introduced in the House before Christmas, the bill to recognize Emancipation Day, which is something that I think we need to think about again today as we celebrate and recognize Black History Month. Again, I express my appreciation for the support of all the members for that noble gesture.

### POVERTY

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I appreciate the opportunity to respond to Minister Matthews and her bill that has been presented. But before I talk about the bill itself, I'd like to thank those activists, those women and men who, in the very dark Harris years and ongoing, have pushed for action on poverty in this province. I have to say to them that I don't think this bill fully honours their efforts yet. I

know their efforts are not over. I know that their energy is not gone. They will continue to fight on, and they'll continue to fight for action in the budgets to come so that, in fact, poverty reduction is made real.

This bill requires all Ontario governments to set targets for poverty reduction, report annually on progress and consult regularly with key stakeholders. This could potentially help push poverty reduction onto the political agenda, push it onto the agenda of governments that might prefer to ignore poverty, and we know what ignoring poverty looks like. We see it on our streets. We see it in the actions and inactions of the federal government and, close to home, we see in this government an administration that talks a lot about poverty, but by any objective measure has fallen far short of the action necessary to really make a difference.

We in the NDP have expressed concerns before and will continue to express concerns about the severe limitations of the McGuinnty government's poverty reduction plan, the fact that it focuses only on children, that the resources are not there in the way they have to be there, that this plan doesn't hasten an increase in minimum wage, improve access to affordable housing and child care, improve the adequacy of social assistance rates and, I should add as well, it doesn't bring in card-check certification so that those people who are working for \$9 an hour can organize and fight for a decent wage. All those things have to be part of a poverty reduction plan that has an impact.

As an opposition party, we have consistently raised the problem of poverty as an issue in this House. We hope that we can utilize this bill, not just us in this party but activists in this province, to force this issue forward, to see that action does take place. We're concerned that it addresses only children. We're concerned that it doesn't put in place enforcement mechanisms for governments that don't act. Most of all, we're concerned that we don't see the concrete action. We see a framework for reporting. We see a framework for setting targets, but we're not seeing the concrete action. We want to see that, because only when we see the concrete action will we know that there will be a reduction of poverty in this province.

### BLACK HISTORY MONTH

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** New Democrats, with great pride, join in the celebration of Black History Month here in the province of Ontario. The history of African Canadians dates back to 1603 and we, as Canadians in pre-Confederation Canada, have to accept some responsibility for the fact that yes, we owned slaves. White people owned black slaves in this country, too.

One of the great moments of course, though, was the emancipation of slaves in the British Empire and the British colonies, and then the revolutionary activities. I take pride in having been a frequent guest at the Salem Chapel, British Methodist Episcopal Church on Geneva Street, along with Jim Bradley and others down in Niagara where Harriet Tubman visited on a regular basis between 1851 and 1857. There was a whole community

of black escapees, slaves who escaped from the south on North Street right behind that church on Geneva Street.

1540

The history of black Canadians is not static. New immigrants on a daily basis contribute and add to the community of African Canadians, many of them francophones, enriching that francophone culture here in Canada.

But let's remark on the words of King: "The Negro's great stumbling block ... is not the White Citizen's Councillor or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to 'order' than to justice ... who paternalistically believes he can set the timetable for another man's freedom."

As we celebrate Black History Month, we have to renew our commitment to expose racism, confront it, condemn it and abolish it. Canadian racism can often-times be so, so polite, the very sort of thing that Martin Luther King talked about. The overt racist, the Ku Klux Klanner, is far easier to deal with. It's that subtle racism, the code language, the phrasing and the attitude that so often can be so much more harmful.

Racism harms all of us. As we celebrate Black History Month, let's commit ourselves to ending racism in this community, in this province and in this country.

## PETITIONS

### HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I'd like to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care should recognize the importance of rural health care in Ontario; and

"Whereas the Erie St. Clair Local Health Integration Network commissioned a report by the Hay Group that recommends the downgrading of the emergency room at the Charlotte Eleanor Englehart (CEE) Hospital in Petrolia to an urgent-care ward; and

"Whereas, if accepted, that recommendation would increase the demand on emergency room services in Sarnia; and...;

"Whereas the Petrolia medical community has stated that the loss of the Petrolia "emergency room will result in the loss of many of our local doctors; and

"Whereas Petrolia's retirement and nursing home communities are dependent on easy access to the CEE hospital;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to urge the Erie St. Clair Local Health Integration Network to completely reject the report of the Hay Group and leave the emergency room designation at Charlotte Eleanor Englehart Hospital in Petrolia" and at Wallaceburg hospital.

I agree with this petition and affix my signature.

## SALES TAX

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to present a petition on behalf of many of my constituents in the riding of Durham. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly:

"Whereas potential new car and truck buyers in Ontario are having trouble accessing credit and loans; and

"Whereas the North American automotive industry is having difficulty selling vehicles; and

"Whereas the province of Ontario has recently lost more than 270,000 jobs in the manufacturing sector alone; and

"Whereas the auto industry in Canada supports an estimated 440,000 jobs, including in that the auto sector parts sector, and generates many billions of dollars in annual tax revenues;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Dalton McGuinty government to introduce a sales tax holiday in the next Ontario provincial budget for the purchase of North American manufactured vehicles."

I'm pleased to endorse this on behalf of my constituents and present it to Patrick, one of the pages here today.

## SALES TAX

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I have a petition here delivered to me by Ab Cox motors in Aurora signed by Mr. Cox, Tracey Cox and their employees and a number of customers. It reads as follows:

"Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the auto industry in Ontario and throughout North America is experiencing a major restructuring; and

"Whereas the current economic crisis is affecting the auto manufacturers and the front-line dealerships throughout Ontario; and

"Whereas many potential automobile purchasers are having difficulty accessing credit even at current prices; and

"Whereas a three-month tax holiday of the GST and the PST on the purchase of new and used cars and trucks would stimulate auto sales;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the provincial and federal governments to implement a three-month tax holiday, and that the Ontario Minister of Finance include the PST holiday in the next provincial budget."

I fully agree with this petition and I'm pleased to affix my signature.

## CHILD CARE

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to present a number of petitions—my riding is very active in its discouragement in the current economy in Ontario. This one here is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services, Madeleine Meilleur, has decided that grand-



parents caring for their grandchildren no longer qualify for temporary care assistance;”—how sad is that?—“and

“Whereas the removal of the temporary care assistance could mean that children will be forced into foster care; and

“Whereas the temporary care assistance amounted to \$231 per month, much less than a foster family would receive to look after the same children if they were forced into foster care;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately reverse the decision” that the minister, Madame Meilleur, has made “to remove temporary care assistance for grandparents looking after their grandchildren.”

As a grandparent, I am pleased to sign, support and endorse this and present it to Alexander, one of the taller pages here at the Legislature.

#### SALES TAX

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, as well, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas the auto industry in Ontario and throughout North America is experiencing a major restructuring; and

“Whereas the current economic crisis is affecting the auto manufacturers and the front-line dealerships throughout Ontario; and

“Whereas many potential automobile purchasers are having difficulty accessing credit even at current prices; and

“Whereas a three-month tax holiday of the GST and the PST on the purchase of new and used cars and trucks would stimulate auto sales;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the provincial and federal governments to implement a three-month tax holiday, and that the Ontario Minister of Finance include the PST holiday in the next provincial budget.”

#### SALES TAX

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** I have a petition regarding an issue that's concerning a lot of individuals from Oshawa, where the auto sector is very important. The petition reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas potential new car and truck buyers in Ontario are having trouble accessing credit and loans; and

“Whereas the North American automotive industry is having difficulty selling vehicles; and the province of Ontario has recently lost more than 270,000 jobs in the manufacturing sector alone; and

“Whereas the auto industry in Canada supports an estimated 440,000 jobs, including many in the auto parts sector, and generates many billions of dollars in tax revenues;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Dalton McGuinty government to introduce a provincial sales tax holiday in the next provincial budget for the purchase of

new, North American-produced vehicles sold in Ontario.”

I fully support that.

#### SALES TAX

**Mr. Frank Klees:** This petition was delivered to me by Colonial motors in Aurora. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the auto industry in Ontario and throughout North America is experiencing a major restructuring; and

“Whereas the current economic crisis is affecting the auto manufacturers and the front-line dealerships throughout Ontario; and

“Whereas many potential automobile purchasers are having difficulty accessing credit even at current prices; and

“Whereas a three-month tax holiday of the GST and the PST on the purchase of new and used cars and trucks would stimulate auto sales;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the provincial and federal governments to implement a three-month tax holiday, and that the Ontario Minister of Finance include the PST holiday in the next provincial budget.”

I fully support this measure, and I'm pleased to affix my signature.

#### SALES TAX

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I have another petition delivered to me by another auto dealer in Newmarket, and it deals with the auto crisis here in this province. It petitions the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“Whereas the auto industry in Ontario and throughout North America is experiencing a major restructuring; and

“Whereas the current economic crisis is affecting the auto manufacturers and the front-line dealerships throughout Ontario; and

“Whereas many potential automobile purchasers are having difficulty accessing credit even at current prices; and

“Whereas a three-month tax holiday of the GST and the PST on the purchase of new and used cars and trucks would stimulate auto sales;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the provincial and federal governments to implement a three-month tax holiday, and that the Ontario Minister of Finance include” the provincial sales tax “holiday in the next provincial budget.”

As I've stated before, I fully support this measure. I affix my signature to it.

1550

#### SALES TAX

**Mr. John O'Toole:** This seems to be a very popular petition, so I'll read another one here. This one is from Roy Nichols Motors, one of the dealerships in my riding of Durham. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas potential new car and truck buyers in Ontario are having trouble accessing credit and loans; and

"Whereas the North American automotive industry is having difficulty selling vehicles; and

"Whereas the province of Ontario has already lost more than 270,000 jobs in the manufacturing sector alone; and

"Whereas the auto industry in Canada supports an estimated 440,000 jobs, including many in the auto parts sector, and generates many billions of dollars in tax revenues;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Dalton McGuinty government to introduce a provincial sales tax holiday in the next provincial budget for the purchase of new, North-American produced vehicles sold in Ontario."

I'm pleased to sign and endorse this, and present it to Nancy, one of the pages here in the Legislature.

#### SALES TAX

**Mr. Frank Klees:** This particular petition comes from Cookstown, delivered to my office by Jack Hamley. It reads as follows, in support of the auto industry:

"Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the auto industry in Ontario and throughout North America is experiencing a major restructuring; and

"Whereas the current economic crisis is affecting the auto manufacturers and the front-line dealerships throughout Ontario; and

"Whereas many potential automobile purchasers are having difficulty accessing credit even at current prices; and

"Whereas a three-month tax holiday of the GST and the PST on the purchase of new and used cars and trucks would stimulate auto sales;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the provincial and federal governments to implement a three-month tax holiday, and that the Ontario Minister of Finance include" the provincial sales tax "holiday in the next provincial budget."

I'm pleased to affix my signature in support of this measure.

#### SALES TAX

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm looking for the petition again. It seems that our side is the only one that is speaking up for Ontario. At this time, I'm going to read another petition. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas potential new car and truck buyers in Ontario are having trouble accessing credit and loans; and

"Whereas the North American automobile industry is having difficulty selling vehicles; and

"Whereas the province of Ontario has recently lost more than 270,000 jobs in the manufacturing sector alone; and

"Whereas the auto industry in Canada supports an estimated 440,000 jobs, including many in the auto parts sector, and generates many billions of dollars in tax revenues";

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Dalton McGuinty government to introduce a provincial sales tax holiday in the next provincial budget for the purchase of new, North American-produced vehicles sold in Ontario."

I'm pleased to sign and support this, and give this to Alexander, one of the taller pages here.

#### FIREARMS CONTROL

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I have a petition from the good people in Eglinton-Lawrence and Bathurst Heights.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there are a growing number of drive-by shootings and gun crimes in our communities;

"Whereas only police officers, military personnel and lawfully licensed persons are allowed to possess handguns;

"Whereas a growing number of illegal handguns are transported, smuggled and being found in cars driven in our communities;

"Whereas impounding cars and suspending driver's licences of persons possessing illegal guns on the spot by police will make our communities safer;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 56, a bill proposed by MPP Mike Colle and entitled the Unlawful Firearms in Vehicles Act, 2008, into law so that we can reduce the number of drive-by shootings and gun crimes in our communities."

I totally support this petition. I affix my name to it.

#### SALES TAX

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the auto industry in Ontario and throughout North America is experiencing a major restructuring; and

"Whereas the current economic crisis is affecting the auto manufacturers and the front-line dealerships throughout Ontario; and

"Whereas many potential automobile purchasers are having difficulty accessing credit even at current prices; and

"Whereas a three-month tax holiday of the GST and the PST on the purchase of new and used cars and trucks would stimulate auto sales;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the provincial and federal governments to implement a three-month tax holiday, and that the Ontario Minister of Finance include the PST holiday in the next provincial budget."



## CHILD CUSTODY

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I have a petition from constituents in the riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, and it reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“We, the people of Ontario, deserve and have the right to request an amendment to the Children’s Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children’s relationships with their parents and grandparents.

“Whereas subsection 20(2.1) requires parents and others with custody of children to refrain from unreasonably placing obstacles to personal relations between the children and their grandparents; and

“Whereas subsection 24(2) contains a list of matters that a court must consider when determining the best interests of a child. The bill amends that subsection to include a specific reference to the importance of maintaining emotional ties between children and grandparents; and

“Whereas subsection 24(2.1) requires a court that is considering custody of or access to a child to give effect to the principle that a child should have as much contact with each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child; and

“Whereas subsection 24(2.2) requires a court that is considering custody of a child to take into consideration each applicant’s willingness to facilitate as much contact between the child and each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child;

“We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Children’s Law Reform Act as above to emphasize the importance of children’s relationships with their parents and grandparents.”

As I agree with this petition, I shall sign it and send it to the Clerk’s table.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

GREEN ENERGY AND GREEN  
ECONOMY ACT, 2009LOI DE 2009 SUR L’ÉNERGIE VERTE  
ET L’ÉCONOMIE VERTE

Resuming the debate adjourned on February 24, 2009, on the motion for second reading of Bill 150, An Act to enact the Green Energy Act, 2009 and to build a green economy, to repeal the Energy Conservation Leadership Act, 2006 and the Energy Efficiency Act and to amend other statutes.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further debate?

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I understand there’s unanimous consent in this House to stand down the leadoff speech for our party to allow our party to participate at a later date.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed? Agreed.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I would like to lead off by recognizing in this House the family of page Emily Wilson who are here with us today. Welcome to the Ontario Legislature. Emily is one of our current group of pages. She’s doing a great job and making us all proud.

I’m pleased to have this opportunity this afternoon to speak to Bill 150, An Act to enact the Green Energy Act, 2009 and to build a green economy, to repeal the Energy Conservation Leadership Act, 2006 and the Energy Efficiency Act and to amend other statutes.

This bill was introduced in this Legislature by the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure just two days ago. I must say that it is highly unusual that an important piece of legislation such as this, with no less than seven pages of explanatory notes and 65 pages of clauses, opening up the Electricity Act, the Ministry of Energy Act, the Ontario Energy Board Act, the Clean Water Act, the Environmental Bill of Rights act, the Environmental Protection Act, the Ontario Water Resources Act, the Co-operative Corporations Act, the Building Code Act, the Planning Act, the Conservation Authorities Act, the Ministry of Natural Resources Act, the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act, the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act and the Public Lands Act—it is highly unusual that an important piece of legislation such as this would be called for second reading debate 24 hours after being introduced for the first time.

The first question that should enter the public’s mind is: Why the rush? Why the normal departure from parliamentary tradition of introducing a bill, then allowing the opposition a few days, at least, to consult with interested stakeholders and the public? What details are buried in this bill that the government doesn’t want people to know about? What are they trying to hide?

1600

Yesterday, our deputy leader, the member for Kitchener–Waterloo, asked a direct and simple question of the Premier. She asked if the bill could be sent to a standing committee of this Legislature immediately for public hearings. This would allow MPPs to receive the input and advice of industry, homeowners and energy experts before hard lines are drawn and parties take firm positions that might be based on insufficient knowledge and lack of information. This is why the standing orders were changed a few years ago to allow for bills to be referred to standing committees right after first reading. Through this process, on a number of bills in the past, parties have been more inclined to work together in the public interest on complex issues such as this one.

It’s interesting to note that a previous energy bill, Bill 100, introduced in 2004 by the then-energy minister, Dwight Duncan, was in fact referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy immediately after first reading. Again, this allowed for public input on a complicated and vital subject, the management of our electricity system, before things were set in stone.

What did the Minister of Energy say at that time? He said, “Bill 100 was sent to committee after first reading.”



"What a pleasant change we've seen in governing in this province when a government actually sends bills out across the province for hearings, welcomes delegations, welcomes debate, welcomes input. That input was so significant that we brought forward a number of amendments resultant from the thoughtful presentations of the many delegations that spoke in favour of this bill."

Again, that was then-energy minister Dwight Duncan on October 18, 2004, explaining why he had sent his Bill 100 to a standing committee of the Legislature immediately after its introduction.

Now, the Premier's response to our deputy leader's question—again, when she was asking that the precedent of Bill 100 be followed, asking that this Bill 150 be referred to committee after first reading—was disappointing and puzzling. It was disappointing because even though it appeared the Premier had not even previously considered the idea, he said no to the people of Ontario who want to participate immediately in a discussion on this issue at a standing committee. It was puzzling because the Premier is suggesting that there will be public hearings after second reading, but of course we know that substantial amendments and revisions to Bill 150 are far less likely if the committee hearings are delayed. That means the public is largely shut out from the fundamental decision-making on electricity policy in the province of Ontario.

Logically, the government's position makes no sense whatsoever. If they're going to have hearings anyway, then time will be spent on hearings eventually. Why not have them after first reading to give Ontarians a chance to speak and a chance to be heard? Again, the only logical conclusion is that the government wants to bury the details because it has something to hide in this Bill 150, and that's why they've initiated second reading debate on a bill starting just 24 hours after it was first introduced.

The government wants to call this bill the Green Energy Act. A more appropriate short title, I think, would have been the Power Grab Act, because what we see here is a massive power grab by a power-hungry Minister of Energy. Mr. Speaker, you should have seen his performance yesterday leading off this debate. The standing orders allow a minister leading off a debate on a bill to speak for up to an hour, but this minister spoke for less than 15 minutes. Instead of explaining the details of the bill, he used much of his time to taunt and criticize opposition members by name: the member for Niagara West—Glanbrook, the member for Burlington, the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke. This is a minister who finds gutter politics irresistible. It diminishes his credibility and makes us question his motives.

We serve proudly in this Legislature. We serve as Her Majesty's loyal opposition. It's our job to point out the drawbacks of what the government is doing, to call attention to the flaws in their policy and to speak for those whose interests the government is neglecting or ignoring. It's our job to stand up against power-hungry ministers promoting power-grabbing power bills. From

what we've seen so far, we don't trust the minister's rhetoric, nor do we trust him with the extraordinary powers that he's seeking under Bill 150.

We believe hydro bills will go up dramatically under this approach. As our party's critic, the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, said in this House yesterday, the hydro bills for Ontario customers are likely to skyrocket, he thinks by as much as 30%. How does he draw this conclusion? Let's look at today's editorial in the National Post, entitled, "An Energy Plan That Won't Help." It is a devastating critique of Bill 150, focusing on the government's understated cost estimates. The editorial points out that the minister claims Bill 150 will only increase the average household hydro bill by 1%, and they call this claim "incredible." It further suggests that the minister's references to the hydro systems in Denmark, Germany and Spain overlook the fact that consumers in those countries pay up to four times the rates we pay currently in Ontario. If we're holding up these countries as the jurisdictions that we wish to emulate, then get ready for a whopping increase in your hydro bill.

The National Post also makes a good point about the timing of Bill 150's introduction of mandatory energy audits: This is not the time to add a costly new burden on homeowners. If the government thinks this is such a great idea to bring in mandatory energy audits at this time of extreme economic challenge, it should be prepared to give cash-strapped homeowners a 100% tax credit on the full cost of the energy audit.

The government could go further. They could match the federal government's tax credit on home renovations, which was announced in the most recent federal budget. This would stimulate the kind of home renovations that would make our homes more energy-efficient.

The other significant point in the National Post editorial is that governments around the world recognize the need for stimulus; they are not digging deeper into the beleaguered taxpayer's pocket. The National Post goes so far as to say that the energy audits "constitute a new tax on Ontario homeowners, the very people who are being hit the hardest by a decline in the value of their core financial asset and a consequent contraction in their creditworthiness. This tax will presumably be incapable, unlike others, of being deferred, deducted or written off on a prolonged schedule.

"In short, it is the ultimate in anti-stimulus."

When our party's critic, the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, made reference this morning in question period to the National Post, the government members laughed, as some of them are laughing again today, and the Premier, unbelievably, implied that he didn't care what the National Post had to say about his legislation. Well, he should, and if he didn't care about the National Post, what about the daily newspaper that he enjoys reading most in the morning? Our friends at the Toronto Star have some questions too. Just look at the headlines of today's paper: "Green Audits Have Critics Seeing Red"; "Legislation's Big Cracks Need Sealing"; "50,000 Green Jobs a 'Tall Order'"; and "End Green 'Dithering,' Utilities Told."



All of these headlines are in today's Toronto Star, and all of these articles would lead a fair-minded person to conclude that the Premier has not hit the sweet spot, as he said yesterday, using a tennis analogy, but instead, he has mis-hit the ball and it's flying well out of the court and into the stands.

The Toronto Star's Jim Coyle's column today is of particular interest. He writes: "How much Ontario intends to pay for green energy, what it will cost consumers, whether the increase can possibly be held to the forecast 1% a year, the distance wind turbines will be kept from houses, how 50,000 jobs are to be produced over three years: All of these were the sort of details yet to be worked out (and in which the devil is famously set to decide)." Good questions from the Toronto Star.

My constituents in Wellington-Halton Hills are concerned about the cost of hydro, and they're also well informed about the need for security of supply. They know that if the lights are to come on when they flip the switch, there needs to be sufficient electricity capacity at that very moment to meet the demands of all the consumers in Ontario. They know that if the lights are to come on, there has to be a distribution network which has sufficient capacity to transport those electrons into their home.

Industry is likewise is very concerned about security of supply because an interruption in electricity means downtime in our manufacturing plants, the few ones that are left, in part because of this government's lack of leadership, which can cost millions. It is my understanding that 80% of our hydro generation capacity needs to be replaced or refurbished in the next 12 to 16 years, and this government has no effective plan to ensure our security of supply over that time. In fact, supply shortfalls are predicted within four to five years, due to plant retirement. It is therefore critical that new generation resources arrive online reliably every year and that demand management and conservation be part of our new energy model. These are the facts, which leads us to one of the Premier's signature broken promises, the one where he promised to phase out coal generation by 2007.

1610

That promise went up in smoke several times in their first mandate. Who in their right mind would promise to shut down a fifth of Ontario's generating capacity with no idea how to replace it or how long it would take? Today, I expect the Minister of Energy would not have the audacity to state categorically when the coal-fired plants will eventually be eliminated.

Clearly, the Premier should have known better than to make this cynical, deceitful promise, especially given that when he was first elected to the Legislature in 1990, he was appointed critic to the Minister of Energy. In fact, I've had the opportunity to review the Hansard record from 1991, and I found an interesting speech on Bill 118, the Power Corporation Amendment Act, initiated by Bob Rae's government.

In criticizing that bill, one of my colleagues at that time gave an impassioned speech on hydro issues. He

said: "This government has given every impression that it does not just want to control Hydro, but rather that it wants to dominate it totally.... The government should not in any way impair Hydro's ability to look out for the interests of its ratepayers.... I submit I am not going out on much of a limb when I say there is a direct correlation between Hydro's rates and our rate of unemployment in Ontario. As the rates go up, so will the rate of unemployment.... In terms of the context within which this bill was introduced, we should note that it was done without consultation. To my understanding, there was no consultation with the public, no consultation with the ratepayers, no consultation with the Association of Major Power Consumers in Ontario or with the Municipal Electric Association, which combined represent over 90% of the ratepayers in Ontario. No consultation with business, no consultation with labour, no consultation with the elected public utility commissioners."

He went on: "We have got to question the wisdom of the minister in introducing a bill in a recession which is saying to employers and investors, 'Here comes an additional tax which we're going to tack on to your hydro bill, a tax which has nothing to do with hydro, a tax which you won't find in any other jurisdiction in North America.' ... Which group or groups were crying out for this change? Who wants government to use Hydro as a tool for carrying out social policy initiatives and thereby drive up hydro rates? Surely not Hydro's ratepayers.... Surely not business, which is already ... besieged by the recession."

Of course, that speech was given in this House by the member for Ottawa South, Dalton McGuinty. The irony, of course, is that much of what he said to criticize the NDP's Bill 118 can be levelled just as fairly at his own Bill 150.

Let's look at another point the government has raised. The government claims that Bill 150 will create 50,000 jobs. Where did they get this number? Did they simply pull it out of the air? When initially asked by the news media, the minister had absolutely no explanation. Where is the breakdown, sector by sector? What were the assumptions used to draw this conclusion? We don't know. We have no answers to any of these questions, yet the government expects us to accept them on faith.

But according to the Toronto Star today, the Power Workers' Union is unwilling to give the government the benefit of the doubt. Don MacKinnon, president of the Power Workers' Union, said that some of the jobs are technical in nature and would require up to six years of training for individuals entering the field. Frank Macedo, a former Ontario Hydro employee and an expert in this area, said that creating that many jobs in three years is a tall order. But then I guess the more realistic members of this government aren't too worried about being in government in three years' time and won't have to worry about how they're going to explain why the 50,000 jobs didn't materialize.

Today in question period, the Premier told us that Bill 150 is "fundamentally about new jobs. It's about clean,



green electricity and it's about fighting climate change." Noble thoughts and goals we all embrace. But we in opposition believe there are better ways to encourage green energy and promote conservation, and you'll hear more about this in the coming weeks.

Last Thanksgiving weekend, I read Thomas Friedman's latest book, *Hot, Flat, and Crowded*. Mr. Friedman is a New York Times columnist and author of *The World Is Flat*, one of this decade's most influential non-fiction books. In *Hot, Flat, and Crowded*, he calls upon American decision-makers to embrace a green revolution with an all-out assault on energy inefficiency. Some time ago, it was reported in one of the papers that the Premier was reading this book as well, but he missed one of its most fundamental conclusions, which is that the free market forces need to be unleashed in this effort. Bill 150 ignores the free market and in many respects represents a government takeover of key parts of our energy system.

I wish that I could go on. I wish the government had been willing to organize a technical briefing on Bill 150 before calling it for second reading. As it is, we're forced to wait until Monday morning next week to hear from the Ministry of Energy staff as to what they think this bill entails and what it implies, and to answer the questions we may have. We have many questions that remain unanswered, and this week the minister failed to answer them in even the most perfunctory way.

As a member of Her Majesty's loyal opposition, I have many questions and have received no answers. As such, I cannot commit to supporting Bill 150 at this time.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Thank you kindly, Speaker.

I listened carefully to Mr. Arnott and his comments. This has not been the free ride for the government that the government thought it was going to be. Indeed, there wasn't even the classic one day of good news. It was within mere hours of the announcement of this legislation that people started to question the claims that were being made by the government—first and foremost, the creation of 50,000 jobs. There may well be 50,000 jobs created in Germany and in any number of other parts of the world, but there's been great, great cynicism expressed, doubt—far beyond doubt; in fact, a rejection of the proposal by writers in the financial pages of almost all the papers over the course of the last day or two days alone. This has been a little bit of a PR flop, if you will.

Look, there isn't an Ontarian who doesn't want to see a more environmentally friendly process of electricity creation. So what's a part of this government's green plan? Millions, millions upon millions—billions—in nuclear power. Nuclear ain't green by a long shot. Never has been; never will be. Not only is it not green, but it's incredibly, incredibly expensive. It's also expensive in this other unique way, because it's unpredictably expensive. It has hidden expenses, not only in the course of building nuclear plants, but in the course of down the road. Every penny of that very ungreen electricity, every

penny of the cost of building those plants and generating that nuclear electricity, will be passed on to consumers, consumers already hard hit.

In a few minutes' time you're going to hear from Peter Tabuns, who is the critic for the New Democratic Party. He will be doing the NDP lead speech. I encourage people to listen very, very carefully.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** I'm pleased to stand today in support of Bill 150, the Green Energy Act. The Green Energy Act has two main goals: one, to bring renewable energy projects to life; two, to create a culture of innovation and conservation where the people of Ontario will begin to live more energy-aware lives.

If passed, the Green Energy Act will create more than 50,000 jobs—more than 50,000 jobs—in three years. These jobs will be created in the construction, engineering and manufacturing sectors.

Bill 150 has a plan that will make it easier to have renewable energy available in Ontario. The plan will create province-wide standards for renewable energy projects, and would include working with cities like Mississauga and Brampton to ensure that new green power is allowed to be developed and fed into the province without long delays.

Bill 150 will set a tone for Ontario to create a culture of conservation. The use of renewable energy to power our homes and businesses will help all of us to play a role in improving the environment. A greener attitude will help make this beautiful province of Ontario an even more beautiful place to live, while at the same time we will be investing in a cleaner, greener future and creating better communities that will benefit our future generations. With the creation of jobs, investment in green technologies—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

1620

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I first want to remind those listening and those paying attention to get a copy of the Hansard for the remarks of the member from Wellington-Halton Hills. He summarized what I think are the salient arguments to a bill that, on the surface, is a shell. It talks green, but it really is a tax hike.

Here's the argument: They're going to invest \$5 billion in a system, and who pays for the system? You pay for it, at your home. When you turn the switch on, you're paying. The \$5 billion translates into about a \$1,200 tax on each household—the four million residents. That's what it is about.

The other part of it: They quote 50,000 jobs. Well, there are going to be 50,000 new government employees knocking on your door, checking your meter—the smart meter, if you're using it. These people will have warrantless entry. This is the most intrusive, diabolical piece of legislation.

The admission of guilt on their side is this simple: They had, back around 2000, Bill 100, which was the



comprehensive review of the electricity system. This is an admission of failure. Now they're coming in with a bill that is a tax grab by any other name.

Many of the articles that the member from Wellington-Halton Hills has cited are to be reviewed.

I caution the viewers and the taxpayers of Ontario to beware. Dalton McGuinty has got his other hand in your other pocket. The trouble is just beginning for Ontario. Now that the economy has gone soft, how are they going to raise all that money? By raising your taxes—and this is how they're doing it.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I'd just like to say that I'm looking forward to speaking on this bill tomorrow, and I'll tell you that I'm going to bring to light a lot of negatives on this bill.

They claim that 50,000 jobs are going to be produced. This is all speculation, this is all forecasts. There is absolutely no concrete evidence. They have come forward with no numbers on what types of jobs these are. Are we talking cement workers, ironworkers? Are we talking meter inspectors? Is the ministry going to send out different types of new legislation requiring homeowners to live up to expectations for the grid?

Now they've got this other \$300 thing they're going to charge homeowners before they sell their home which they can't afford. A lot of these people are on fixed incomes, and they're going to force them to pay \$300 when some of them are barely getting out of their houses now—the elderly—and forced into another situation because they can't afford their homes. Now, they're going to create this new legislation.

Trust me, this bill has to be adjusted and changed a lot before you go to third reading—if it gets that far—because I'm telling you right now that what I've read today and what I've studied today is absolutely a grey area. It's a mockery to the people of Ontario. It's only based on 25% of the entire grid; 75% of it is coal-fired and nuclear power. So don't tell me that you're doing a big, 80% improvement in energy—you're not. You're dealing with 25%. I could sit here today and tell you that they'll be lucky if they touch 4% of the 25%.

This is another show for the public with absolutely no substance—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. The member for Wellington-Halton Hills, you have two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I want to express my appreciation to the member for Welland for responding to my remarks this afternoon. He outlined his view that the government has not had a free ride with respect to this Bill 150, and certainly that has been the case. I think the government anticipated having a completely laudatory response from everyone in the province of Ontario, and clearly that has not happened.

The member for Welland pointed out that he very much questions the projection by the government that this bill will create 50,000 jobs. I certainly agree with

him in that respect, although I have to say that I part company with him on his views on nuclear power.

The member for Mississauga-Brampton South repeated the government's messages very capably. However, again, I don't see the kind of detail that the opposition parties in particular, and I think increasingly the people of Ontario, need to see before they're prepared to sign on in support of this particular piece of legislation.

I want to thank my colleague the member for Durham, who is a former energy critic for our party, one of our most effective members in this Legislature. He represents the Durham riding, of course, and within his riding is the Darlington nuclear generating plant. I would suggest that there is no member in this House who knows more about that particular part of the hydro business, and certainly his views need to be considered by all of us.

I want to thank the member for Hamilton East-Stoney Creek for his comments. I, too, look forward to his speech when he gets a chance to speak in this House. I think the New Democrats are probably looking at this bill in a similar way to our party: While at the same time we agree with the need for enhanced efforts to promote energy conservation and energy efficiency, whether or not this Bill 150 is the way to go is another big question. We're just in a position of not having the answers that we're seeking and not even having had the chance to have a comprehensive ministry briefing, which is the normal process, the normal routine for caucuses on issues like this—and we're still having to wait till Monday. It's just unacceptable. I think the government needs to go back to the drawing board and see how it manages these sorts of bills.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. Further debate. The member for Toronto-Danforth.

*Applause.*

**Interjection:** That's fake.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Thank you, Speaker. The sincere and devoted response of the other members of the House is deeply touching.

Today, I want to speak about how far Ontario is behind the rest of the world and how long we've waited to act. I want to talk about the few positive things I see in this bill—an attention to new building codes—and I want to address the shortcomings—like a new building code without detail—or the absence of targets so that this government can be held to account. I want to highlight some major flaws, like this government's inexplicable fixation on nuclear power. It's expensive and, frankly, you can't build a 21st-century energy system on a foundation of a 20th-century technology.

I've worked on environmental issues, specifically climate issues, for a few decades. I've seen a lot of false starts and I've seen a lot of broken promises. We only have to look at the promise of the Liberals to shut down coal-fired plants in this province by 2007 to remind ourselves of how far wrong things have gone. We can't afford to have this legislation be one of those false starts. We can't let good-sounding or high-sounding rhetoric from the minister dissipate into an emptiness thanks to



bad regulations that we have not seen, that have not been put before us as legislators. The crises that we face here in Ontario are too substantial, too important for us to fail.

But before I go any further, I want to thank those women and those men out there in the environmental movement and the labour movement who again, for decades, have fought for good jobs and for green jobs, for an approach to the environmental crisis that puts people to work, puts them to work in well-paying jobs, secure jobs; people who have worked hard to push the public and push government to actually take action. If they had not done that work, if they had not been out there talking, urging and convincing, then we would not be here debating this act today. We would not be debating any action on the environment. They have a lot of work ahead of them.

This bill, in my opinion, does not give Ontario what it needs. Action is going to have to be taken to change this bill so that it will, in fact, address our needs, our demands in this province.

1630

We need to look at the background of the problem. What are we dealing with here? Twenty-one years ago in this city, in Toronto, was held one of the first major meetings on climate change in the world. Here in Ontario people came to talk about the challenges we face in this world. They talked about what was coming at us. A few years after that—17 years ago—the world committed to act on climate change at the Earth Summit in Rio. Twelve years ago, Canada signed on to the Kyoto Protocol; six years ago, we ratified it.

Five years ago, this government came to power during some of the best economic times Ontario has ever seen. It came to power at a time when our economy was expanding, when the total wealth of the province had grown. That time was not well used. Five years later, the government is finally starting to say that, yes, there is a link between the economy and the environment, a link between action on climate change and action on jobs.

It's not as if the solutions, the approaches, have not been out there. Back in the depths of the last recession in the early 1990s, when I was on Toronto city council, I had an opportunity to work with construction unions, with businesses and with my colleagues on city council from every political persuasion to put in place the Better Buildings Partnership. Using a revolving fund, we were able to finance energy efficiency retrofits in institutional buildings and office buildings, putting people to work, cutting air pollution and making a difference for our economy and our environment at the same time. We've known about that for a long time.

This government, when it came to power in 2003, looking at the challenge it had shutting down coal, could have simply copied the program still in place in the city of Toronto, which generated in total close to \$200 million in economic activity and about 2,000 person years of employment so far.

In 2003, when I was head of Greenpeace here in Canada, I had an opportunity to work with the CAW and

with the federal NDP to develop a green car strategy. Even then, before the oil crisis hit, before the financial crisis hit, it was clear to a lot of people—and I credit the CAW for this; it was clear to the CAW and to environmentalists—that the direction the auto industry was taking had to change, because problems were going to come down that track toward us.

It's unfortunate that those solutions we put forward at that time, that agreement we hammered out between auto workers and environmentalists, were not accepted by the federal government, which at that time was talking about what should be done with auto in the long run, how to deal with the California efficiency standards that were being discussed at that time. We lost a massive opportunity.

Although I think the credit crisis would still have caused profound problems in the auto sector, if changes had been started five years ago to make the auto sector more sustainable, to develop cars that were far more efficient, then I think the auto sector would have been in a much healthier state when this crisis came down.

It's not as if other places have not acted. In Denmark in the 1970s, they went through the oil crisis and they had a fundamental debate in their country about their energy direction. Would they go nuclear; would they go with alternative energy? That was a profound debate about the direction of a society. I've had an opportunity to talk to some of the people who were involved in that debate.

They decided that the future was in renewable power, and in this small country with a population the size of the greater Toronto area, they took their intellectual expertise and developed the modern wind turbine industry, an industry that in 1980 really didn't exist and now employs 20,000 people in that country. Their second-biggest export is wind turbines. It's an interesting story of conversion and change.

The largest wind company in the world, Vestas, used to make farm machinery. They moved on. One of the biggest wind turbine manufacturing centres in Denmark used to be a shipyard. A friend of mine, Mark Bartlett, who is with the CAW in Windsor, did that research about the conversion of industrial plants from one use to another and the potential, the opportunity, for us here in Ontario.

So when I say we have lessons to draw from the rest of the world, I'm quite serious.

In Germany, a jurisdiction that the minister cited the other day in his press conference, the second-largest consumer of steel is their wind turbine industry. In Portugal, they brought in a mandatory requirement for new buildings to have solar power incorporated into construction back in 2006. It is 2009. Pennsylvania used the action of its state government to bring investment for 3,000 solar jobs in that jurisdiction. In Toledo, Ohio, 6,000 people work in their solar industry. They use the intellectual capital in their university, and they use the work, intelligence and the skills of those who used to make auto windshields to make the glass for the solar panels.



They've in fact done what we need to do in Ontario. They've taken on 21st-century industry and used the skill and the commitment of their population to make those new products.

In California, they're building the world's largest solar electric plant. In Quebec, they have a requirement that if you're going to put up wind turbines, 60% of the value in that wind turbine has to be Quebec-sourced. It's kick-starting the wind turbine industry in that province. In Manitoba—and they've had this for a number of years now—they provide low-interest loans to families so that they can upgrade their homes: put in geothermal heat pumps, insulate the houses and put in high-efficiency windows. And those high-efficiency windows are made in Winnipeg. They take the money in their society and, instead of buying energy from outside of Manitoba, they're recycling those dollars within the province.

So there's tremendous opportunity that has been demonstrated in other jurisdictions to create manufacturing jobs and to transition an economy from one energy system to another. In many ways, it's analogous to the beginning of the coal era, the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in England, a move from horsepower and human power to fossil fuel power. That sparked the Industrial Revolution and it changed the history of the world. We are at that point in the history of our society. We can either take it on and be leaders or we can be like countries a century or two centuries ago that missed out and were superseded by other societies.

Now, in the past year, here in Ontario, we've been rocked by energy shocks, job shocks and market shocks. Our climate is changing, and we are bleeding good jobs. The need for solutions is very clear, and the desire for urgency is obvious. Is this bill before us the response that Ontario has been waiting so long for? Will it do what the government says?

As you know, we are facing the most severe economic downturn since the Great Depression. This government has ignored much of it. Dalton McGuinty has gotten some very bad press over what has been seen to be a cavalier and disconnected approach to the economic crisis. Because of that lack of forward thinking, because of that lack of commitment and action, workers in this province are paying a very heavy price. You talk to workers in Hamilton; you talk to them in Sudbury. When people are laid off, when they lose hope for the future, families start to be plunged into conflict and turmoil. You see kids in difficulty in the streets. We're paying a very high price for years of neglect, years of ignoring what challenges were coming down toward us.

We here in Ontario were stuck with a manufacturing base that assumed that oil would flow cheaply forever, that the climate wouldn't change. Anyone who was familiar with what's really going on in the world knew that that could not be the case. But what we had was a legacy of hands-off, do-nothing government—the Mike Harris approach—that was, with a little gentle modification, simply carried on by the McGuinty government, ignoring the fact that you need hands-on government if

you're going to transform industry; that you have to have activist government that looks to the future, looks at what has to happen right now and brings those things together. That has left us unprepared for the economic tsunami that has hit. It leaves us in a position where we're both trying to protect jobs and running to catch up with economies elsewhere which got with the program earlier. In Michigan, their state government is doing an inventory of all the auto parts plants to see which can be diversified to make renewable energy products. I have no sense whatsoever in this province that that level of mobilization, analysis and preparation is going on, and I'm not seeing it in this bill.

1640

Across the United States for the last few years, governments, unions and environmentalists have been working together to try to build a new energy economy. Over a year ago I was in Pittsburgh for a conference that was put on by the Steelworkers in conjunction with the Sierra Club of the US, and at that time, in the depths of the Bush presidency, the view from Canada was that nothing was going on. But when you go down there, there's a ferment going on. People understand where the future jobs are going to be, how we get them, how the investments have to be made. What has happened with the election of Barack Obama is that that ferment has burst into the open for the world to see: \$100 billion committed to redeveloping the energy system, to developing energy security and autonomy for the United States, to breaking away from the importing of foreign oil. Here in Canada we had a succession of Liberal and then Conservative governments that dithered and did nothing, and here in Ontario the same story, except that we had Stephen Harper to blame. It is, in fact, quite sad that we waited until change came to the White House for Ontario to act, for this bill to be brought forward.

We have to remember, if you want to understand where Ontario is and where it is going, that we are addicted to imported energy. We spend about \$40 billion a year on energy in Ontario. We import 90% of our primary energy. We have very little oil, very little gas. We don't mine coal. We import, and so tens of millions of dollars a day go out of this province to buy that energy: money that leaves our economy, leaves our industry, leaves our working people, and builds economies and jobs elsewhere.

It's against this backdrop of economic decline on the one hand—everyone is aware of that—and environmental crisis that we need to look at this bill. Is it adequate to take on that scope of issues? It's not enough to say, "Is this better than this government's sorry record on climate change?" because that's a very low bar to clear, a very low bar. Ask, "Is this bill up to the enormous challenge of shoring up our economy, rebuilding it, redirecting it and taking on the climate crisis?" I don't believe it is, but I'll start with a few constructive comments and then I'll go to the elements where I think this bill has substantial problems.

I think it's a good idea that we're talking about good jobs and climate in the context of a bill. It's good to see



that that old debate of environment versus jobs is set aside. We know that to take on environmental issues is an opportunity to create jobs. It's good to have that on the table. We want to stop pretending that one, jobs, is at one end of the spectrum, and the other, environment, is at the other end of the spectrum. They are joined. They are linked.

A feed-in tariff for new renewable energy projects could be helpful. For those at home listening and thinking, "What is a feed-in tariff and do I pay it when I come across the border from Detroit?" no, it's a guaranteed price for electricity produced from renewable sources. Linked, in this bill, is guaranteed access to the market, to the grid. So guaranteed price and guaranteed access to the grid have the potential to create investment, create new sources of electricity generation in this province.

I think it's a good thing that we're talking about beefing up the building codes and mandating energy efficiency. It's long past overdue—far, far overdue. We haven't seen any details yet, and frankly, this government hasn't earned the benefit of the doubt, but my hope is that in the course of this debate we will actually have the opportunity to push for some of the most robust standards that exist in this world.

Likewise, higher efficiency standards for appliances: We may have a small market for appliances here in Ontario, but my hope is that, if we push hard enough, we will show other jurisdictions that there's an opportunity here, possibly linking up with those jurisdictions so that we create a larger demand for products that are very high efficiency and undermine the market for those products that are so inefficient that they shouldn't be sold.

I think it's a good idea that homeowners get assistance to put in place small-scale renewable energy. I was in Sault Ste. Marie yesterday and had a very interesting opportunity to talk with a fellow who's running a small manufacturing business in the Sault area—St. Joseph Island, to be correct. He makes frames for solar panels that have an actuator on them that turns the panels to follow the sun. He makes about 20 or 30 a year. He creates jobs in that area and installs them himself. People are putting them up on their homes, particularly those who are remote from power lines. There's an opportunity there for us. If those people are going to get help, I think it's a useful thing. I'm not sure this bill will deliver it, but I think it's worth having the debate about the opportunity that's there, the opportunity we should take.

That's the constructive; these are the things that I think are very useful, and I look forward to seeing where we can make improvements. My concerns are that when you look at this government, you have to judge it on its record, not on its lofty promises. The Premier has broken many promises. That's no surprise to anyone in this House.

So, goals are one thing, achieving them another. One good way to achieve a goal is to set a target. This bill doesn't do that. I raised that in the briefing I got with ministerial staff before we had this bill presented. This was raised with the minister when he was at his media

conference. When you don't set targets, you give a government incredible wiggle room. If almost nothing happens, they can say, "Well, something happened." If what happens is far below what is really needed to make a change in Ontario, they can say, "Well, something happened." A lack of targets is a lack of a commitment and a lack of accountability. If the government knows where it wants to go with this bill, it needs to tell us where it wants to go, where it expects to go, where it forecasts to go so that we can tell whether or not in fact this initiative has been effective.

You have to ask, will this act actually stimulate the kind of green energy transformation that this province badly needs, both environmentally and economically? The minister claims that it will, and the minister claims a lot of things. The minister claims that Ontario is a leader in green energy, while a more objective look at the Ontario Power Authority would suggest otherwise. In fact the OPA, the Ontario Power Authority, which actually goes out there and contracts for energy supply, is very conservative in terms of its renewable energy ambitions. It only aims to achieve about one sixth of what the Green Energy Act Alliance has deemed possible. In the NDP, we ask, and all serious Ontarians would ask, "Where does that really leave us if in fact their ambitions are so limited and so low?"

My colleague from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek said, "So where are these 50,000 jobs going to come from?" Frankly, if your ambition is 500 kilowatts or 3,000 megawatts, those are very different implications in terms of jobs. Will this bill actually significantly increase the percentage of renewable energy in the electricity system in Ontario? Will it enhance the level of conservation and energy efficiency in the province? Will it help reduce our reliance on polluting and non-renewable forms of power such as coal, natural gas and nuclear? Will it protect individuals and companies who are vulnerable to electricity price increases? Will it ensure that Ontario becomes a leader in the manufacture of renewable energy technologies? I have to say, I don't see those answers being forthcoming.

I asked many of those questions the other day when I had the briefing about this bill, and the ministerial staff, question after question after question, said either, "It hasn't been worked out yet," "We'll know in a month," or "Can't tell you that." So I have to say, you can't say you brought along something that's the best thing since sliced bread and not know how many slices there are going to be, not know how many jobs are actually going to be created and not know what the real price of electricity is going to be from your initiative.

1650

Ontario's integrated power supply plan, the plan for electricity production over the next few decades in this province, had very modest targets for renewables and conservation. They're not on track to meet those modest targets. Perhaps that explains why there were no new targets announced when this bill came forward. The government knows it's going to fail—probably better not



to set a target and put itself in a position where it can be held accountable. That is a substantial flaw, a fundamental flaw in this bill.

It's not only the NDP that's concerned about the lack of a baseline in this energy bill. Two University of Western Ontario profs, who interviewed 63 wind developers, were quoted in the newspaper story yesterday saying that the act doesn't go far enough because it fails to include long-term targets for renewable capacity and leaves too many decisions to ministers. They say that the act doesn't remove investor uncertainty that's hindered investment to date, because it doesn't establish long-term targets for renewable capacity, and instead "leaves key decisions on targets and power pricing in the hands of the minister." They say the Green Energy Act further broadens ministerial powers, exposing policy even more to political pressure.

Will the act, in the context of Ontario's ongoing commitments to nuclear, actually result in a significant increase in renewable power in Ontario? That takes us back to that question of targets. The minister said yesterday that Ontario is following the European approach of no targets or caps. Well, in fact, Dr. Hermann Scheer, who was the person who sponsored the legislation in Germany that radically changed the environment for energy production, does have a target. His target is the elimination of nuclear and conventional energy systems. That's his target.

The German government has set a 30-year phase-out period for nuclear power in that country. When they go forward for renewable power, it's with a view to substituting that renewable power for the other sources of power. When the minister says they don't have caps or targets in Germany, Dr. Scheer's target, the architect of their energy direction, is to make this the dominant form of power. He's pretty clear about that.

We've got a situation here where the minister says that by paying an attractive, guaranteed price for renewable power, the feed-in tariff, the government's creating an open-ended opportunity for the production of renewable energy. It's not up to the government to set limits on how much green energy is provided to the grid. But in the next breath, the minister says that 75% of Ontario's energy will continue to come from nuclear and hydro. That says to me, and my colleague from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek said the same thing, that we're talking about a small part of the pie. We're not talking about the whole pie; we're talking about a small part of it. If that's what you're doing, then you're not going to take on the economic crisis in this province, and you're not going to take on the environmental crisis.

If we continue that whole path of investing in unreliable and expensive nuclear, then we set a de facto cap on the development of renewable energy in this province, on the development of conservation in this province, because you only need so much, ultimately. If half the electricity demand is met by nuclear, then you're certainly not going to build enough renewable power to fill in that gap; you're not going to overbuild two and three and four times.

Right now, I can tell you it's capped. When I was asking ministerial staff the other day, "So how much new renewable power will this bill actually put in place?" they had no idea. It hasn't been set; we're going to have to wait. So, again, it's not quite the millennial bill that it was advertised to be when the minister talked about it.

We have tremendous opportunity for renewable power here in Ontario. According to the Ontario Clean Air Alliance, our potential for wind power in this province is more than 10 times greater than our total electricity consumption. We actually could be putting in place enough wind turbines, not just to power our electricity system but to fuel the green cars of the future. We don't have to have nuclear power to do that. We have the opportunities right here. We have untapped water power potential. If we wanted, we could import power from Quebec; I'm sure they'd be very happy to sell us some of their hydro power.

Despite all of this, in the latest Ontario Power Authority plan the McGuinty government only plans to develop 8,000 megawatts of new renewable energy by 2025. That's 500 megawatts a year for the next 16 years. The renewable energy contribution in Ontario, according to the current OPA plan, will increase from 22% this year to 30% in 2016. Doesn't sound like a transformation of the energy system in this province to me. The numbers don't support that kind of hype. Between 2016 and 2025, renewable energy will be flatlined. That's no new renewable energy for nine years.

To put this in perspective, over the next 20 years Ontario will install less than one fifth of the solar panels that Germany has put up in one year. Again, that doesn't sound to me like you're transforming the energy system in this province. It sounds to me like you're repackaging the renewable energy goals that existed previously.

You and I, Speaker, are operating in an information vacuum, because until that integrated power supply plan, the electricity plan for Ontario, is brought forward, we won't know whether this plan, this act that's on the table now, is going to have any substantial impact. It may simply be a repackaging of all that we've been dealing with for the last few years.

In 2027, according to current plans, Ontario will have less wind capacity than the state of Texas already has today—Texas, one of your premier oil centres in North America. Doesn't sound to me like we're as ambitious as the minister is stating we are.

Why are we in Ontario setting our goals for renewable energy so low? The answer, in the end, is that we have this stubborn commitment to nuclear power. If you're going to have a commitment to have 50% of your electricity made with nuclear power, then you're going to have to cap the growth of renewable energy. That's the message from leading environmental groups in this province.

According to Greenpeace, "The government's 2006 electricity plan caps the development of green energy, so the government could meet its self-imposed target of maintaining nuclear at 50% of supply."



According to the Pembina Institute, "Ontario's electricity plan actually halts construction of ... new wind turbines in 2018, in order to leave space for the new" nuclear "reactors that the province is considering purchasing."

According to the David Suzuki Foundation, "To be effective in making Ontario a global green energy leader" the government must avoid "new investments in nuclear facilities, to avoid 'capping' renewables and efficiency gains due to oversupply from non-renewable sources."

According to the World Wildlife Fund, "We will get a sign of the degree of ambition when we see the new" OPA "plan in March." If the OPA plan is radically different, then this bill will be of greater consequence, but if it leaves all the major pieces in the same place, and the same targets are there, then this bill will just be a reshuffling of the cards and not actually a change in direction for this province.

The bill supposedly establishes the "right to connect" for renewable projects, but the McGuinty government is putting nuclear first and leaving only the leftover space for green energy. In other words, as much as Bill 150 might encourage new investment and production of renewable energy, it will be doomed to failure unless the McGuinty government reverses its plan to build new nuclear plants at Darlington and refurbish its Pickering B plant. It has to open up space on the grid for renewable energy if it really wants to talk about large-scale investment in renewable energy.

Monday, the minister said we need nuclear energy because renewable energy sources like wind and solar are unreliable and intermittent. It's interesting to see the double standard here. Complex, next-generation nuclear energy plants, like the ones that the government of Ontario is considering, are facing unresolved technical setbacks around the world. New designs from Westinghouse, AECL and Areva, the contenders for the contract to build new nuclear plants in Ontario, are all either in prototype stage or years behind schedule in development. There's still no accepted way to safely store radioactive waste, yet this government talks of nuclear as proven and reliable. On the other hand, it characterizes renewable energy as flawed, unreliable and intermittent, ignoring the fact that storage of wind energy is viable. It ignores the complementarity between solar and wind—wind may not blow as much on a hot day, but the sun is shining—and ignores the vast and reliable potential of renewable energy sources, such as waste heat recycling from industrial sources, combined heat and power, and biomass.

1700

Similarly, it's one thing to promise strong building codes, but another to deliver them. This government has a patchy record on regulation and a dubious record on caving in to developers. Until the exact targets for building efficiency are known, the jury is still out.

I'm also concerned that the government is relying on people and businesses to make the switch to a greener future, not investing in it directly. In other places where a

new energy economy is emerging, the government plays an active role beyond that which this bill contains. In Australia, for example, the government is dealing with a recession and their environmental problems by directly funding the energy efficiency retrofits, the insulation of more than two million homes—direct action on the part of the government to reduce energy consumption in that country.

Ontario has an economic downturn too, yet it isn't helping construction workers find work right now by helping to make buildings more efficient. Presumably, the logic of making new buildings more efficient also applies to making old buildings more efficient. Unless we reduce our overall use of energy, it will be much more difficult for renewable energy to meet demand.

One question that came up that I find curious and others may well comment on is the question of costs. The other day, the minister suggested that this bill would only increase ratepayer costs by 1% per year. I have to ask, if the government hasn't set the price at which it will buy green energy, if it doesn't know what the supply mix is going to be, if it doesn't know what the distribution system is going to be with new, distributed generation, then how do they know electricity rates will only go up 1%? Maybe it's true. But if you don't know the costs that are coming in and the factors that are going to generate those costs and the scale of those factors, then how do you prepare an estimate that's better than a guess or a wish?

Energy conservation investments are very cheap. The only thing that's comparable in cost to the coal power that's being phased out is energy conservation and efficiency. Then you're talking equivalents. Saving a kilowatt hour with efficiency costs about the same as generating a kilowatt hour with coal. Renewable power is more expensive, sometimes two or three times more. We need to invest in it. We need to have it. It needs to be part of the mix, and we've got to build the capacity. That's a simple reality.

So I have to ask the minister, if he's saying there will be only a 1% increase with a substantial change in our renewable energy investment, how do those numbers add up? One of the possibilities is that the minister expects very low uptake on this; that this isn't a turbocharging of green energy development, but a continuation of the snail's pace development of green energy in this province. Otherwise, I don't think that his numbers can add up. Frankly, we haven't been presented with the numbers, so it's hard for us to say whether they add up or not. If he has them, they haven't been released.

We know that there are people in this province who are vulnerable to higher costs. I have to say, I think if we continue to go down the nuclear road, at the very high prices that nuclear power is coming in at, people will be hit hard. Whichever road we go down, we are going to have to take action to make sure that vulnerable, low-income households are protected. We know that people have difficulty paying their bills. This minister has said that low-income households will be protected, that there



will be assistance, but we can't tell from this bill exactly what that's going to be. At this point, until we're actually presented with more documentation, we're left in a "Trust us" situation, and as you know, Speaker, from having been here for a while, that doesn't generally work in this environment.

There are concerns not just about people on low income but about industrial transformation. We in the NDP have called for an industrial hydro rate to protect large power-consuming industries, and we've tied it to job guarantees and guarantees of investment in conservation so that we actually get back out of that commitment to industry the sorts of things that we need in this province. A question I have to ask the minister: What sort of protection will there be for those large power-consuming industries so that we don't see more job loss in this province? I would rather have those heavy industries here in Ontario than have them move to other parts of the world that have lower standards for environmental protection.

I'm concerned about the vagueness on the domestic-content requirements. In fact, if we are going to build a new energy economy here, we have to use our procurement policies and our energy policies to create a domestic market. That will give us the potential to incubate the industrial development that Ontario will need for decades to come.

I was earlier talking about being in Sault Ste. Marie yesterday and talking to a fellow who is putting in solar panels. I asked him where he got the actual solar panels from: Tennessee. I just thought: Tennessee; not exactly a jurisdiction you think of as an environmental leader. Why is it that Tennessee is doing that sort of work and we aren't? When are we going to actually put in place the domestic-content requirements so that to access our market, we get that kind of investment?

The government cites its 50,000 job creation. Let's assume that they're correct when they say that 50,000 person-years of employment will be created. As you well know, we've lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs over the last four years. I don't know whether 50,000 is a correct number or an incorrect number; I haven't seen the basis for the calculations. But I know that in comparison to the scale of the loss that we've endured, that we've been stuck with, it is not, at this point, adequate.

To recap: I don't see the targets; I don't see the specifics for efficiency measures. I see vagueness about real costs and no specifics for domestic content. It's an awful lot of wiggle room for the government, an awful lot of wiggle room. It would be very difficult to hold them to account, to say whether or not they have been successful in what they've decided to put forward. That lack of accountability is something that we in this province can't afford.

I want this government to revise the bill, to bring forward a program so that we have targets that we can look at, numbers we can assess, so that we can determine whether, in fact, what's been brought forward will give us the results and the changes that we need. I look

forward to working with colleagues in committee and in this House to make those changes.

One of the concerns I have with this bill and its coupling with the electricity production in this province is that if we go forward with the investment in nuclear, we won't have enough demand to actually build a renewable energy industry here. I can't understand why this government is not willing to accept going in that direction. The minister has said that making conservation a priority is part of the thinking of this government, but the Ontario Clean Air Alliance notes that for every \$1 that the Ontario Power Authority spends on energy conservation and efficiency, it spends \$60 on new energy supply. I think that says right there where the commitment and the direction of this government is on these matters.

1710

The minister says that the government's approach to the electricity supply is balanced, but the Ontario Clean Air Alliance recently showed the McGuinty government was willing to spend 50 times more for a kilowatt of nuclear energy than it is to pay for a kilowatt of energy conservation. If we're going to invest tens of billions of dollars in renewing our electricity system, we need to invest it in 21st century technology, not 20th. We need to rethink this bill; we need to rework it in committee; we need to rework it before it comes back for third reading.

I have concerns about reliance on the market to kick-start new renewable developments. I have no doubt that Ontarians are ready to buy renewable energy and that in the long run efficiency and renewable energy are economically viable. But we need to have governments step up, take action and be willing to be leaders.

If the last few decades have taught us anything, it's that saying nice things about the environment and then taking a passive approach as a government is not adequate. We here in Ontario have said that we have to take an all-hands-on-deck approach to dealing with the environmental problems we have and the economic problems we have. One glaring omission in this bill is the permission for Ontario Power Generation to actually come on board in a big way and develop renewable energy projects.

If we say that the problem before us is as great as it is, and in fact I believe it is very large, then we need to be utilizing the public sector, its skill, its commitment, its talent, to develop renewable energy and conservation in this province and not simply leave it to the market. My hope is that we can actually match the rhetoric that's coming out of the new American administration with a commitment in Ontario to making the changes that we need, to building the economy that we need here. We need targets with teeth in this bill for renewable energy, we need regulations that are ambitious, we need to reconsider spending \$100-billion-plus on a nuclear-centred electricity system, and we need an active government to lead and build a new energy economy.

I look forward, Speaker, to working with you and other members of this Legislature, to working with



people in the environmental community and the labour community and the citizenry as a whole, to actually make sure that this bill is driven in a direction that will make a difference for Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I'm proud to stand here today to speak to this bill and to the presentations by the member from Toronto–Danforth.

The Green Energy Act, if passed, would help the government to ensure Ontario's green economic future by building a stronger, greener economy, better protecting our environment, combatting climate change, and creating a healthier future for generations to come. The Green Energy Act is a bold series of coordinated actions with two equally important thrusts.

I have to say that when I was listening to the member from Toronto–Danforth, I think that he said a lot of things that support what we're going to do. The feed-in tariff: He was all for that; a guaranteed price. As-of-right grid access: He agrees with that. So we have a lot of areas that we're going to do that he has supported. Service guarantees, streamlined approvals for renewable energy projects: These have been brought forward and are getting good support from the municipalities of Ontario. A renewable energy facilitator: He didn't mention that, but that's going to be important, because we all know about projects that would like to hook up to our grid that can't hook up to our grid. These changes have to be made. Streamlined approvals for the large transmission projects, because we have to rebuild the grid; the smart grid implementation, supporting the establishment and implementation of a smart grid for Ontario which will bring an additional new renewable energy project; setting the stage for the electric car; solar panels, which the minister has spoken of, on all those flat roofs in Toronto; distributed generation; incentives for small-scale renewables. These are all things that I think the member supported. Updating Ontario's building code: It's right in here. This is going to be a five-year review. We've come a long way and we're going to go further with that. Establishing mandatory electricity conservation targets for local distribution companies: Those targets are important. I agree with you, and I think you support that. That's in this.

Establish sustainable funding for conservation. Green Ontario government broader public sector building facilities—that's going to be important.

I thank you, Speaker, for this. I'd like to go on on all the things that this member supported in our bill.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The member from Toronto–Danforth has indeed a respectable history on speaking up on behalf of the environment. As a side note—if I stay on topic here—I wish him luck in his leadership campaign.

That being said, once again it's too far, too fast. That's the real theme here. If you want to really understand what I'm saying, if you look back to the original promise in

the 2003 election by the Liberal government, they promised then—Mr. Speaker, you would know that because you ran—that they would cancel coal by 2007. Now, here's the dilemma for the people of Ontario: If they promised they were going to cancel all the coal plants by 2007, if they promised it and they didn't know they couldn't do it, then that was irresponsible. They shouldn't promise when they don't conclusively have the technical plan to make it work. But if they promised it and didn't know it, then they have another word for that. That's called not telling the truth.

Now, they did the same thing in 2007. They promised 2011. Now, the people of Ontario know, or should know, that coal represents about 20% to 25% of the power base in Ontario. They still don't have a plan that works.

With all due respect, I support renewable energy. Renewable energy at its very maximum contribution to the grid will be around, if maxed out, 10% of the generation capacity. It is not reliable; you'll have to have backup power, usually natural gas or coal. So be careful of what they're saying. They know not what they do. I'm very suspicious. It's another misgiving to the people of Ontario. You're going to pay more and use less.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Laurel C. Broten:** I'm pleased to have a chance to respond to the comments made by the member from Toronto–Danforth. I'm pleased to be in the Legislature today and in the weeks ahead as we continue the dialogue and debate on this transformational piece of legislation.

What I would like to do at this moment is add the voices of others into this debate and let this House know what others have said about the Green Energy Act.

"The Green Energy Act makes Ontario the leader in renewable energy policy in North America. Our call for the critical elements of a feed-in tariff, the right to connect and community power has been answered. If the regulations and directives to follow result in a culture of conservation being created and open opportunity for greening our supply mix that also creates 50,000 manufacturing jobs, we will no doubt be able to call ourselves a world leader in installed green energy within the next decade." That's Deborah Doncaster, the chair of the Green Energy Act Alliance.

Another strong voice with respect to green energy states, "Ontario's Green Energy Act represents North America's most ambitious and far-reaching enabling legislation and will place Ontario as a world leader in renewable energy development, industrial innovation and climate protection." That's Dr. Hermann Scheer, general chairman of the World Council for Renewable Energy, member of the German Bundestag.

Other powerful voices with respect to the actions being undertaken by our government come from CanWEA, the Canadian Wind Energy Association, who applauded the announcement and said: "With today's tabling of the Green Energy Act, the Ontario government has sent a clear signal that wind and other renewable energies will play a key role in meeting the province's



economic and environmental objectives going forward." CanWEA believes that the GEA is an important step towards achieving CanWEA's wind vision for 2025.

These and others voices have applauded this step.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments? The member for Toronto-Danforth, you have two—oh, I'm sorry. I apologize to the member from Chatham-Kent-Essex.

1720

**Mr. Pat Hoy:** I'm pleased to join this debate—clean energy, in the main, is what we're talking about.

I have significant wind farms in the Chatham-Kent portion of my riding, and I'd like to respond to the member who was just speaking that there indeed are job figures that go with these wind farms. The local economy is stimulated as well. The municipality will be receiving taxes from these wind towers in the future, when they're up. Currently, there are 44 in place at the Port Alma Wind Farm, enough clean energy for 30,000 homes. The local landowners, be they farmers or otherwise, will receive up to \$300,000 a year for leasing the footprint those towers have in place.

Three new ventures have been granted permission to move ahead—in excess of 100 towers—and more money and jobs will be created because of that. These three projects have a capital cost of \$760 million and again provide leases to the landowners where the towers would sit, a much-needed economic boost for Chatham-Kent. There would be monies going to the municipal treasury as well, and in this case, there will be 558 jobs created and enough green power for 74,000 homes.

So this is part of what has happened today, and I can see the expansion of jobs, growth and increasing monies for municipalities and landowners with the passage of this bill.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Not much of what was said on questions and comments related to your remarks, member for Toronto-Danforth, but you have two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Speaker, I appreciate your observant commentary. Nonetheless, I want to thank the members for Ottawa-Orléans, Durham, Etobicoke-Lakeshore and Chatham-Kent-Essex for getting up and making comments.

I have no doubt in my mind that hundreds of thousands of jobs can and will be created in renewable energy. Whether they will be created in this province is another matter. Whether this bill will actually deliver the goods is another matter.

The member from Ottawa-Orléans is correct that there are a number of elements in this bill that, if actually applied with regulations that are written to give effect and have teeth, then, yes, it would create jobs. My worry is that we have been presented with a bill without targets within the framework of a government that is still profoundly committed to nuclear.

When I asked ministerial staff about how this would actually change the mix of electricity generation in Ontario the other day, they had no answer to that ques-

tion. So until I see very substantial numbers, all I can assume is that we have a repackaging of what has gone before, with some minor improvements. That is not adequate to deal with Ontario's environmental or economic problems. It may be nice and it may be useful—it may be—but the scale of problems we face is quite profound.

If we spend \$40 billion a year on energy in Ontario, we spend somewhere in the range of \$10 billion or \$12 billion a year for electricity. We're not talking about the whole of the electricity file with this bill; we're talking about a portion of it. We need to be talking about the whole \$40 billion. We need to be talking about using domestically generated, renewable energy to replace more and more of those imports. When we start talking on that scale, then we do talk about rebuilding Ontario's economy.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I join this debate with excitement and optimism. The Green Energy and Green Economy Act, to me, represents a way to the future in our province.

I'm actually quite dismayed by the pessimism being demonstrated by the two opposition parties, almost reminding us that these are political parties from the fossil fuel era. We, in this government, are focused toward creating a 21st-century Ontario, an Ontario with a vision to the future, not looking at 20th-century ideas but looking at and championing 21st-century solutions. That's what this act is about.

One political party is too concerned about the process. The other is quibbling about details, as opposed to looking at the motivation, the inspiration behind this legislation and saying, "Hey, we've got to get together, collectively, and make sure that Ontario is not stuck in the bad old days; that the Ontario we leave behind, as this Parliament, is one which looks after our future, our children—an Ontario which is truly green, an Ontario which is truly the basis of a new economy."

We in North America are really concerned about our lifestyle. We're a lifestyle-driven continent. That's part of our culture. It's something we're very proud of. But it's a culture where we also want to make sure that we live in a sustainable fashion, that we take into account the impact we are having on our neighbourhoods, our communities, our towns and our villages and the environment around us. Legislation like Bill 150 ensures that not only do we enjoy our lifestyle, something which we are very proud of, something our ancestors worked extremely hard to build, but also that we do so in a manner that is sustainable, that we do so in a manner which keeps in mind the future we are building on this continent. We need to ensure that we are making changes in our lifestyle, that we are taking action in the way we live to reduce our environmental footprint, to ensure that our actions are not harming our communities, but in fact enhancing and fostering them.

I'm very proud to represent the riding of Ottawa Centre—which is, I sometimes joke, the centre of Ottawa—a community which very much takes a sustainable



way of living close to heart. There are many, many community organizations in my riding which work very hard at the local level, at the street level, at the block level, at the community level, at the neighbourhood level, to ensure that we are living in a sustainable fashion, and I'm sure all the members in this House have organizations like that—for example, the group called Sustainable Living Ottawa East, SLOE, led by Rebecca Aird, a committee of the Ottawa East Community Association, which conducts projects that help people who live, work and study in Old Ottawa East to take concrete, practical steps to live more sustainably by reducing environmental pressures. This type of legislation helps groups like Sustainable Living Ottawa East to accomplish their goals right in their communities, right in their neighbourhoods.

EnviroCentre—Dana Silk is the executive director—conducts energy audits. The member from Ottawa—Orléans got his energy audit through EnviroCentre, who work, in fact, with a lot of people living in low-income housing to ensure that they can live in a fashion which is sustainable, helping them to ensure that not only can they enhance the environment, but also save money doing so. Economically, it makes sense.

One Change, another great group led by executive director Stuart Hickox—all of you may know One Change through Project Porchlight. This is a group which recruited volunteers in 100 communities across the province—3,000 volunteers going door to door and giving out light bulbs. We're really proud, right here in this Legislature, as part of the McGuinty government supporting this group through the budget in 2006, of giving them \$1 million so they can accomplish that task. Right in the middle of the riding of Ottawa Centre, they're coming up with great ideas to mobilize the community to ensure that we live in a sustainable fashion.

1730

I want to talk about Living Lightly, a project led by David Chernushenko. Some of you may know David—he ran for the leadership of the Green Party—a committed environmentalist who brings forward real, practical ideas at the community level by which we, as members of the community, can foster our environment by coming up with ideas which are good for the economy and good for the neighbourhood. It is all these groups and organizations in my community, in my riding and in yours, which we need to support by coming up with ideas and giving them policy and legislation such as the Green Energy and Green Economy Act.

So what is this legislation trying to do? It is bold legislation, in my opinion. It is legislation which is trying to do two things: One, it's trying to make it easier to bring renewable energy projects to life right here in the province, to make it easy for big groups and small groups, large corporations or community groups, to start renewable energy projects. That is an important step. And number two, it's trying to foster a culture of conservation by assisting homeowners, government, schools, individuals and employers to transition to lower and more efficient energy use.

I come back to my original point: We in North America like our lifestyle, but we also want to ensure that we conserve, that we live in a sustainable fashion. This legislation provides that perfect blend of ensuring that we have access to renewable energy in our province, which, by the way, will create new jobs. We're very quick in this Legislature to give examples about the great things other states and other countries may be doing. We keep hearing about Sweden, Denmark, Germany and everybody else on the planet, but somehow we are so negative about everything else we're doing right here in Ontario. I really hope, and I am sure that all those other jurisdictions are looking at us and saying, "Oh my God, look at Ontario and how great they're doing," because we are, right here, through this legislation, trying to ensure that we create a significant demand for products and services that help in creating these renewable energy projects.

We're looking at jobs in domestic manufacturing and assembly. We're looking at jobs in architecture, construction, trucking, servicing and installation. We're looking at jobs in financing, engineering; electricians, inspectors; computer software and hardware. We're talking about the full spectrum of jobs one looks for in any economy right here through this very important piece of legislation.

And on the other hand, we're trying to foster a culture of conservation. We are all trying to say, "Hey, look, we all have to live responsibly, and we, the government, are going to give you the tools necessary to make that happen." These are two really important aspects of this legislation, and that's why I'm very proud to support this legislation, because it really brings the right blend and the right mix, which are necessary.

Let me just sort of outline some of the key measures that are part and parcel of this legislation, and then I'm going, towards the end, to hone in on three elements which I think are really important from the perspective of my community in Ottawa Centre. What are some of the key measures in Bill 150?

Bill 150:

- creates an attractive feed-in tariff regime, a pricing system for renewable energy that will guarantee rates and help spark new investment in renewable energy;

- establishes a streamlined approvals process and provides service guarantees for renewable energy projects;

- establishes a right to connect to the electricity grid for renewable energy projects;

- appoints a renewable energy facilitator to offer one-window assistance and support to project developers in order to facilitate project approvals;

- streamlines approvals for large transmission projects;

- establishes for the first time province-wide standards for renewable energy projects like standardized setback requirements for wind farms;

- helps local communities to build and operate their own renewable energy—and I'll come back to that;

- generates facilities, including support for community projects;



—implements a smart power grid in Ontario, making it easier to connect renewable energy generation to the system;

—offers incentives for small-scale renewables, such as zero for low interest loans to assist homeowners in financing and capital costs of residential renewables.

These are some key measures that are outlined in this very detailed legislation.

Let me talk about three important aspects which really sort of caught my attention, something which I've been talking about in my community in Ottawa Centre, something I've been hearing from my constituents on a repeated basis. That is, one, the local contribution of members in the community in renewable energy projects and the interaction with the Planning Act; two, a need for something like a community energy co-operative; and, three, home audits, which have been spoken of a lot in the last couple of days of debate.

I have a story to tell about—I'm not sure if you want me to tell the story, but I will share a story about a good friend of mine, Graham Findlay, who lives in my riding of Ottawa Centre. Not only is he my constituent but he is a good friend, a person I have known for many, many years, who speaks passionately about wind power. He's an engineer by profession. He not only speaks passionately about wind power but he is involved in the trade, in making sure that there is wind energy not only in Ontario but also across Canada.

Graham came up with this great wind ball, which is Energy Ball V100, which stands about 10 metres high, which was made for our urban communities. It's not a windmill; it's a wind ball. It's a very interesting-looking device which is meant for urban communities. If you've got a backyard, you can put your own windmill—it creates about 10 or so megawatts of energy—and be part of the grid.

Because of the local bylaws in Ottawa—the bylaws in question limit accessory building structures, which wind turbines are classified as, in residential areas to 4.5 metres and require they be set off from property lines at a distance equal to their height—he needed to go to the committee of adjustment to get approval. NIMBYism came into play: not in my backyard. I think a lot of us have heard of that. One of the neighbours, who is also my constituent, did not like the idea of having a wind ball in the backyard and challenged it at the committee of adjustment. Graham lost the approval, did not get the approval from the committee of adjustment and has now actually appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board.

Here's somebody—and many like him are just trying to lighten their footprint, just trying to help in creating renewable energy and putting it back into the grid. This legislation will allow Graham Findlay and others to accomplish that. This legislation will allow the requirements under the Planning Act and create a province-wide standard through the facilitator to ensure that certain criteria are met where we don't get into the business of NIMBYism, that one person will not be able to derail a worthwhile project, so that all of us, one by one, could become creators of energy and contribute in that aspect.

The other aspect that I am quite a fan about in this legislation is supporting community power. It's enabled community ownership of renewable energy projects by citizen-led energy co-operatives and clarified the local distribution companies, like Ottawa hydro in my city—municipalities are able to invest in under-10-megawatts renewal energy projects.

1740

For some time before I even ran for public office, I always talked about this. I got an estimate done as to how much it would cost me to put solar panels on the rooftop of my house. I've got a flat roof. The cost was prohibitive. I, as a young professional, was not able to bear that cost. I thought at that time that it might be interesting if some of my neighbours and I got together and invested together to bring the cost down and still be able to feed back into the grid. I started talking to a lot of the people I mentioned earlier about that idea.

Recently, a group has been created in my community called the community association for environment and sustainability. Just two or three weeks ago, we were discussing the idea of an energy co-operative. I'm really happy, I'm really excited, to see that idea right here in this legislation; that we the government, through this legislation, will allow for energy co-operatives. We have experienced co-operatives in terms of housing, and they're a successful model. We have seen food co-operatives supporting local producers, local farmers. Why not have community energy co-operatives? So I'm very, very excited that this is part and parcel of this legislation, because I can tell you that my community, right there in Ottawa Centre, an urban community in the middle of the city, is really going to benefit and there will be quite a few takers for such initiatives. This is exciting news.

Lastly, I want to talk about the issue of home audits, something that has come up quite a bit. I want to congratulate my colleague from Ottawa-Orléans, Phil McNeely, for requiring home audits, something which I understand the Progressive Conservative Party—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Well, the Conservative Party—has supported not only in their platform in the October 2007 election, but more recently during the debate on Bill 101 by Mr. McNeely.

We make many purchases. When we buy a used car, we need a safety check. We spend anywhere from \$2,000 to maybe \$15,000 to buy a new car, but we need a safety check in order to have the car registered, in order to have insurance. When you buy a house anywhere in Ontario now—probably, on average, about \$200,000—you get nothing. You don't know what shape the house is in. You can waive the inspection. By having an energy audit done, at least you get some basic information about the property you're buying: whether this house is an energy hog, or whether this is a house where you can save and conserve, or at least get some marching orders of what you need to do to make it energy efficient.

Cost has been talked about. It costs \$300 to do an energy audit. Right now in Ontario, \$150 of that \$300 is



paid by the Ontario government, so the net cost to the homeowner, to the seller, is only \$150. I think that is worth incurring, that we are paying a part, to ensure that the homes we are living in are energy efficient.

My time is ticking down. I just want to congratulate the Premier for his leadership, for his vision, through this legislation. I want to congratulate the Minister of Energy, George Smitherman, for his hard work.

I think this is an important piece of legislation. I hope I will get more opportunity to speak on this, because I know that my community is really excited about this legislation. I think it has all the right elements. Together, we can really build a 21st-century Ontario, and this legislation will ensure that.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It's always interesting to hear a young, modestly experienced member speak on a very technical subject. He brings a great deal of passion to it, and I do respect that.

A couple of little things, some clarifications—it's important to read the bill, not just the notes they give you to read.

This section on the feed-in tariff is fairly technical, and I think it's worth reading. For the record, let's just look at what the feed-in tariff means. It's going to cost a lot. I'll give you an example. If everybody had a wind turbine in their backyard, or solar panels, and they wanted to feed into the grid, you'd have to have an upload. Often, you'd have to have a voltage regulation interface, whether it's DC power converting to AC power, and there's a tariff for these charges. In fact, there's a congestion on the grid today. So if he looks at section 25.35, he will see, "to develop a feed-in tariff program," means "a program for procurement" that provides "standard program rules, standard contracts and standard pricing regarding classes of generation facilities differentiated...." What this is is more red tape; in fact, appeals in courts and litigation.

For instance, the other comment he made was that he's got a friend—and it's good to see that you have innovative friends—with a wind ball. There are many new innovations that are going to come on. I think he's got a windbag, not a wind ball. However, to me, every house will want to get off the grid, because if you look at your electricity bill, about 70% of the bill is actually tariffs. It's not for electricity. It's the debt reduction charge. It's the delivery charge. All of these bills are about 65%—so unless you're off the grid, you have to pay the charge. So if everybody wants off the grid, everybody is going to have a wind ball or a windbag or a wind turbine on their house, and the neighbourhoods will look like trash.

Now, I would say to you that you should read some of these bills because I'm not sure that the member is familiar with what he's asking for. Thank you very much.

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I'm very conscious of the clock tonight, so just bear with me.

The member for Welland for questions and comments.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I want tell you that it was a delight to listen to the comments from Mr. Naqvi, the member for Ottawa Centre. He's a first-termer. He spoke for the 20 minutes allotted him. He spoke with rare reference to notes. He spoke using storytelling techniques. He clearly researched the matter and had personal input in this Legislature by virtue of his comments. I would caution or ask some of his other colleagues to understand that that's the way you do it. You don't use two-minute questions and comments to say, "I'm pleased to participate in this debate." You do a little bit of work, you do some research, you bring some novel ideas to the issue, and people are going to sit and listen and your constituents are going to respect it. You come here and read a government script for two minutes and somehow suggest that that's called participating in a debate, and you're a waste of a seat.

I want to caution people, though, that this member and I very much disagree on the effectiveness of the legislation. He's enthusiastic about it, as he should be as a government member, as a person who's ambitious, I'm sure. I don't share his optimism about Bill 150, but I do appreciate his effective participation in the debate, bringing a unique perspective to it and not using the very oftentimes shabby government scripts that are handed out to government backbenchers.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments.

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell:** I'm very pleased to rise today as well to support Bill 150. I do want to compliment the member for Ottawa Centre for all the remarks. They were certainly, I felt, very well researched and very pertinent to the bill.

But I could not stand up and talk about renewables without talking about my own riding of Huron—Bruce. I know the members here in the House are curious as to how many renewables the riding of Huron—Bruce has brought online in the last couple of years: 434 megawatts. That's what we have brought online from my riding. When we think about the potential for my agricultural community to not only harvest the wind—they can harvest their crops. We look at the footprint that is left by the turbines, and it is such a small portion of the workable land that is taken out of production. It's another revenue source for my agricultural community, and it's a steady source of income. I can tell you the challenges that they are facing right now. This energy act, the Green Energy Act, could not come at a better time. I would remind the members in the House that this is working land. This is working land that feeds the people of Ontario. This is the land that will also fuel our energy grid, and it will ensure that we have a reliable, clean, affordable source of energy.

I also will be speaking later about the Green Energy Act, but I do want to talk just for a moment about switchgrass. A number of my farmers are now switching to switchgrass, which is made into pellets and then it produces energy from that. I have much more to say. I'm very strongly supporting Bill 150, and I look forward to a little bit more time in the next round.



1750

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** Just in the brief moments that we have, I'd like to make a couple of comments. I think the things that the public naturally wants to know about any kind of generation are: the efficiency, the opportunity for savings and the question of the environmental footprint. It's interesting to look at the kind of generation mix that we currently have, where 36% of the current generation mix is nuclear. Sometimes, people don't appreciate the fact that it is a steady flow. It is the base upon which the generation is made. Hydro represents 24%; coal, 20%; and gas, 10%.

One of the advantages of coal and gas is that they are both able to come online and also meet peak demands and then be reduced back. As I said a moment ago, nuclear is just a steady, constant amount. Then we look at others, which would be biomass at 6% and wind at 1.5%. I think it's important to understand that this is what we have as a current mix. What we have to be careful of, I think, in this bill and in the generation that falls from it, is the fact that we have to maintain this balance, and I think that that's really part of this discussion for this bill.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The member for Ottawa Centre, you have two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I really like this peer review mechanism we have after our speeches. I want to thank the members from Durham, Welland, Huron-Bruce and York-Simcoe for their insightful comments. The member from Welland, I've been listening to you often in this Legislature for a year and a half. I'm trying to pick up some tips, so thank you very much for your positive

feedback on that; I really do appreciate it. But I don't share your pessimism. I'm an optimist by nature, and I'm also a very optimistic Canadian. I think a lot of you have heard my story. I came from a country where my father spent nine months in prison because he did not have this opportunity to participate. So no matter how long I am here and how many bills pass or don't pass, I will always feel encouraged about this process, where we can, in a civilized manner, debate our issues, agree to disagree and make sure that this province is a better place to live for all of us. That's why I'm so supportive of this particular legislation, because it is charting a path to the future. It is providing a map, looking to the 21st century and not looking back to something we should have left a long time ago. This is very, very exciting.

I've gone into detail as to the elements of this legislation which are particularly important and interesting to me. I think that, in terms of the economic impact, by creating this massive demand, this hunger for green energy, we will inevitably create a lot of jobs right here in this province, hiring Ontarians, who will be very proud to say that this province is at the cutting edge in the global economy in terms of building a community and a society which is energy-efficient and green in nature, and ensuring that we as a province, and eventually we as a country, will flourish and prosper.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** According to my trusty pocket watch, it's 6 of the clock, or some proximity thereto. This House is adjourned until Thursday, February 26, at 9 of the clock.

*The House adjourned at 1756.*

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry	
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		Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu
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Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
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Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
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Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
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Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
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Helena Jaczek, Sylvia Jones  
Jeff Leal, Liz Sandals  
Maria Van Bommel  
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## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. John O'Toole.....	5038
-----------------------	------

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

<b>Northern economy</b>	
Mr. John O'Toole.....	5038
<b>Mopar Canadian Nationals</b>	
Mrs. Maria Van Bommel .....	5038
<b>Arborisan Wood Craft</b>	
Mr. Norman W. Sterling .....	5039
<b>Niagara Peninsula Children's Centre</b>	
Mr. Peter Kormos.....	5039
<b>Siemens Canada</b>	
Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis.....	5039
<b>Literacy and basic skills</b>	
Mr. Garfield Dunlop .....	5039
<b>Crime Stoppers awards</b>	
Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn.....	5040
<b>Township of Woolwich</b>	
Ms. Leeanna Pendergast.....	5040
<b>Ridings of Northumberland—Quinte West and Peterborough</b>	
Mr. Lou Rinaldi.....	5040
<b>Private members' public business</b>	
The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters).....	5040

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI

<b>Poverty Reduction Act, 2009, Bill 152, Ms. Matthews / Loi de 2009 sur la réduction de la pauvreté, projet de loi 152, Mme Matthews</b>	
First reading agreed to.....	5040
<b>Greenbelt Day Act, 2009, Bill 153, Mr. Dickson / Loi de 2009 sur le Jour de la ceinture de verdure, projet de loi 153, M. Dickson</b>	
First reading agreed to.....	5041
Mr. Joe Dickson .....	5041

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES

<b>Poverty</b>	
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	5041
<b>Black History Month</b>	
Hon. Margaret R. Best .....	5042
<b>Poverty</b>	
Mrs. Julia Munro .....	5042
<b>Black History Month</b>	
Mrs. Joyce Savoline .....	5043
<b>Black History Month</b>	
Mr. Ted Arnott .....	5043
<b>Poverty</b>	
Mr. Peter Tabuns .....	5043
<b>Black History Month</b>	
Mr. Peter Kormos.....	5043

## PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

<b>Health care</b>	
Mr. Robert Bailey.....	5044
<b>Sales tax</b>	
Mr. John O'Toole.....	5044
<b>Sales tax</b>	
Mr. Frank Klees .....	5044
<b>Child care</b>	
Mr. John O'Toole.....	5044
<b>Sales tax</b>	
Mr. Ted Arnott .....	5045
<b>Sales tax</b>	
Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette.....	5045
<b>Sales tax</b>	
Mr. Frank Klees .....	5045
<b>Sales tax</b>	
Mr. Frank Klees .....	5045
<b>Sales tax</b>	
Mr. John O'Toole.....	5045
<b>Sales tax</b>	
Mr. Frank Klees .....	5046
<b>Sales tax</b>	
Mr. John O'Toole.....	5046
<b>Firearms control</b>	
Mr. Mike Colle.....	5046
<b>Sales tax</b>	
Mrs. Julia Munro .....	5046
<b>Child custody</b>	
Mr. Jim Brownell .....	5047



## ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

### **Green Energy and Green Economy Act, 2009, Bill 150, Mr. Smitherman / Loi de 2009 sur l'énergie verte et l'économie verte, projet de loi 150, M. Smitherman**

Mr. Ted Arnott.....	5047
Mr. Peter Kormos .....	5050
Mrs. Amrit Mangat.....	5050
Mr. John O'Toole .....	5050
Mr. Paul Miller .....	5051
Mr. Ted Arnott.....	5051
Mr. Peter Tabuns .....	5051
Mr. Phil McNeely.....	5058
Mr. John O'Toole .....	5058
Ms. Laurel C. Broten .....	5058
Mr. Pat Hoy .....	5059
Mr. Peter Tabuns .....	5059
Mr. Yasir Naqvi.....	5059
Mr. John O'Toole .....	5062
Mr. Peter Kormos .....	5062
Mrs. Carol Mitchell .....	5062
Mrs. Julia Munro .....	5063
Mr. Yasir Naqvi.....	5063
Second reading debate deemed adjourned.....	5063

# CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Wednesday 25 February 2009 / Mercredi 25 février 2009

## ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

<b>Family Statute Law Amendment Act, 2009, Bill 133, Mr. Bentley / Loi de 2009 modifiant des lois en ce qui concerne le droit de la famille, projet de loi 133, M. Bentley</b>	
Mr. John O'Toole.....	5017
Mme France Gélinas .....	5019
Mr. Paul Miller.....	5020
Mr. John O'Toole.....	5020
Second reading agreed to .....	5020
<b>Employment Standards Amendment Act (Temporary Help Agencies), 2009, Bill 139, Mr. Fonseca / Loi de 2009 modifiant la Loi sur les normes d'emploi (agences de placement temporaire), projet de loi 139, M. Fonseca</b>	
Mr. Yasir Naqvi .....	5021
Mr. John O'Toole.....	5023
Mme France Gélinas .....	5024
Mr. Khalil Ramal .....	5024
Mr. Yasir Naqvi .....	5024
Mrs. Joyce Savoline .....	5024
Second reading debate deemed adjourned .....	5027

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Jeff Leal.....	5027
Mr. Norm Miller .....	5027
Hon. Harinder S. Takhar .....	5027
Mrs. Linda Jeffrey.....	5027
The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters).....	5027

## ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

<b>Renewable energy and energy conservation</b>	
Mr. John Yakabuski .....	5027
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	5027
<b>Renewable energy and energy conservation</b>	
Mr. John Yakabuski .....	5028
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	5028
<b>Employment insurance</b>	
Mr. Paul Miller.....	5029
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	5029

## Green power generation

Mr. Rosario Marchese .....	5030
Hon. George Smitherman.....	5030

## Student safety

Mrs. Joyce Savoline .....	5031
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	5031

## Poverty

Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....	5031
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	5032

## Ontario film and television industry

Ms. Laurel C. Broten.....	5032
Hon. M. Aileen Carroll .....	5032

## Skills training

Mr. Jim Wilson.....	5033
Hon. John Milloy .....	5033

## Infectious disease control

Mr. Peter Kormos .....	5033
Hon. Christopher Bentley.....	5033
Hon. David Caplan.....	5033

## Municipalities

Mr. Phil McNeely.....	5034
Hon. Jim Watson.....	5034

## Diagnostic services

Ms. Lisa MacLeod .....	5034
Hon. David Caplan.....	5035
Mr. Norman W. Sterling .....	5035

## Services en français / French-language services

Mme France Gélinas .....	5035
Hon. David Caplan.....	5035

## Northern health services

Mr. Bill Mauro .....	5036
Hon. David Caplan.....	5036

## Forest industry

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette.....	5036
Hon. Donna H. Cansfield.....	5037

## Mineral exploration and production

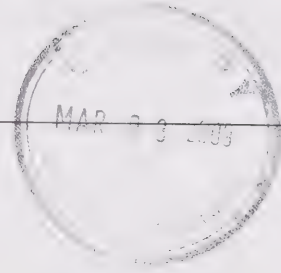
Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....	5037
Hon. Michael Gravelle .....	5037

*Continued on inside back cover*



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**Thursday 26 February 2009**

**Jeudi 26 février 2009**

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 26 February 2009

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 26 février 2009

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by a moment of silence, of inner thought and personal reflection.

*Prayers.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### GREEN ENERGY AND GREEN ECONOMY ACT, 2009

#### LOI DE 2009 SUR L'ÉNERGIE VERTE ET L'ÉCONOMIE VERTE

Resuming the debate adjourned on February 25, 2009, on the motion for second reading of Bill 150, An Act to enact the Green Energy Act, 2009 and to build a green economy, to repeal the Energy Conservation Leadership Act, 2006 and the Energy Efficiency Act and to amend other statutes / *Projet de loi 150, Loi édictant la Loi de 2009 sur l'énergie verte et visant à développer une économie verte, abrogeant la Loi de 2006 sur le leadership en matière de conservation de l'énergie et la Loi sur le rendement énergétique et modifiant d'autres lois.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** This debate, despite the government's attempt to make it so, is not about whether green energy is a good thing or whether we should support the quest for a safer environment any more than my tie today makes me more or less motivated to live a greener life. We all know that we should, and we know that we have to. There's no debate about that at all.

This debate is less about a bill and more about vision, about honesty, about good policy and effective government. We live in an era where governments have the opportunity to introduce groundbreaking, innovative legislation that will revolutionize our lives. Ontario is indeed at a point at which it can and should choose a direction that will be an example and an inspiration to other jurisdictions. It is beyond disappointing that, with Bill 150, the McGuinty government is choosing again to squander that opportunity.

We already know that on McGuinty's watch Ontario has slipped from first place to last on the economic front. We know that there is no real leadership there to tackle the challenges that face our province now and which we will face in the future. We also know that the reason that

this bill has been introduced now, without proper briefings for the opposition, without consultations and without any details outlined in its text, is because Mr. McGuinty would rather discuss a root canal than talk about his failure to address Ontario's economic crisis.

So two days ago, we heard the Minister of Energy lead off the debate on Bill 150. When he was czar of the Ontario health ministry, he built the LHINs, and you don't need me to tell you how well that worked out, how economically efficient and responsive our health care delivery did not get. At the rate at which resources disappeared at the Ministry of Health when he was minister, he'd run out of sand in the Sahara, given the opportunity.

Now, we let the fox back into the henhouse, this time dressed in a green robe, under the assertion that no one but he can bring green energy into Ontario, and that no way is a good way unless it's his way, never mind that it destroys real estate investments, negates personal freedoms and changes Ontario's energy infrastructure to something right out of Stalinist Russia.

He wasn't satisfied with H One, OEB, IESO, OEFC, ESA, OPA and CCO. Apparently there weren't enough acronyms in the systems yet, so he brought in REFO, which makes most of the other acronyms mean SFA, perhaps for the Secure Future Agency. This bill is crap—concerted robbery of all people. Is this a Liberal thing or what? When in doubt you create an agency?

First, the recent MPAC assessments, which Mr. McGuinty refused to review or reassess, and which increased property tax payments for most Ontarians, are bleeding our residents dry, assessing our homes at the peak of the cycle and now forcing us to pay taxes on a value we couldn't get if we sold—and many homes are having to be sold. I don't see any cities or towns lowering their mill rate to make the adjustment.

Just yesterday, across my desk came the position of the Ontario Real Estate Association. I quote their president: "This mandatory government regulation will impose a significant cost on home sellers." They have four points, and I'd like to read them into the record.

Point one: "Mandatory home energy audit reports will have serious cost implications for home sellers. Those with less than ideal energy audit ratings will face pressure from homebuyers to either spend thousands of dollars to improve the energy rating of their home or lower their sale price. Many middle- and low-income Ontarians simply cannot afford the cost of financing home energy retrofits."

Point two: "Those sellers who can afford expensive retrofits will want a premium sale price. As the cost of



housing rises, fewer and fewer low- and moderate-income Ontarians will be able to find affordable housing. Government policy should promote affordable home ownership."

Point three, and this is a big one: "Seniors will also be disadvantaged by mandatory home energy audits. Most Ontario seniors rely on the equity they have built" into "their homes for retirement. Mandatory home energy audits will force homeowners who are seniors to complete energy retrofits at a tremendous cost to their retirement savings" at a time when they can ill afford it.

Point four: "Mandatory home energy audits will adversely affect first-time homebuyers" because "the majority of homes that will not score well on home energy audits are resale homes."

Important points to consider. Add to that actual losses that property values have suffered—over 6% in York region since last year—plus land transfer taxes basically doubled right here in Toronto, and what you have left are a number—indeed, thousands—of beleaguered homeowners struggling to salvage the investments they have made in their homes over many years. Our homes are, for most of us, the biggest single investment of our lives.

Enter the McGuinty team with fox in tow. They decide that now is a good time to whack the homeowner over the head with yet another hurdle, the mandatory energy audit. Beyond adding an extra cost to the sale of a home, the Liberals decided that it would be a great idea to help devalue the last investments that people may have left after their savings and retirement plans have taken the hit they have already taken on the markets.

What a fantastic thing to tell seniors whose retirement savings have been slashed in half: that they may have to put an extra 20 Gs into their home before they go ahead and sell it. What a time to do that. What a great thing to do to people who have lost their jobs in this economy and are trying to downsize, just so they can make ends meet. Let's hear it for Team McGuinty, who chose this particular moment to make sure that Ontario homes are devalued even further, and their owners will struggle that much longer in an already difficult housing market.

0910

Hey, Ontarians, this government is trying to tell you that they will do everything they can to get green energy to Ontario. What they are not telling you is that they will take everything you've got to do it their way. They will. Why use a carrot when you can use a stick, right?

The sheer shamelessness of this bill is offensive to me, and if my correspondence is the yardstick, also to many Ontarians. The only thing that is green about the Green Energy Act is its title. Otherwise, it is as dirty as the coal plants that Mr. McGuinty, in two elections, promised to close but which are still open; the same coal plants that Mr. McGuinty could have cleaned with relatively acceptable dollars for high-tech scrubbers and which could have been a resource in the future of Ontario's clean energy plan, much like clean coal plants are an integral part of Germany's green energy strategy. Germany is touted by this minister as the model, by the way.

Liberals claim that this bill will create jobs. How exactly will it do that, and how did they arrive at 50,000 as the number? There is nothing in this bill that would actually support the claim of creating any employment outside of government-paid jobs. As written, the only thing that I can see Bill 150 creating is 50,000 inspector overlords with sweeping powers to monitor our residents' energy consumption: "Excuse me, ma'am, I have a search warrant to measure your refrigerator's power consumption, so I'm coming in under this warrant." Can you believe that? Can you believe it? I cannot believe that we are actually discussing a bill that will allow provincial inspectors to descend on our homes to check on our energy conservation. What's next? Curfews? Food rations? Food rations checking for no trans fats, of course.

With Bill 150, the minister is implementing regulations that will undermine whatever economic stability Ontarians have managed to retain in these times of economic crisis. People fear for their jobs. They are afraid for their families. We have entered a cocooned siege mentality period, and in the name of all that's green and holy, this minister and the McGuinty government are preparing to drop an economic bomb on families. They are ready to say that he is on our side and that we, on this side, are not pro-conservation or pro-renewable energy if we vote it down. That would be patently untrue.

My suggestion to my friends the MPPs on the government side is that you take a good long look at your constituent e-mails, your calls and your letters before you stand in party solidarity to vote. Because if you push this down their throats, your vote may well add a member to my caucus to replace you. Ontarians know something is not right here. They know it when they see it, and they know, at the same time, that green is good, so there is an obvious disconnect. They will support green energy—Ontarians will—but they will not accept your plan to get it.

Liberals call Bill 150 revolutionary legislation, but all they really have is a pickpocket bill, a pickpocket bill with Ontarians as the designated victim. They tell us that energy costs are rising everywhere, but they don't tell us that their plan will increase the price of power in Ontario well beyond worldwide levels.

For all the regulation that they are subjecting Ontarians to, the Liberals are leaving themselves ample room to manoeuvre out of any accountability. I can hear it now: "That extra debt retirement amount on your power bill is not a tax. No, sir. It's what you owe the electricity supplier for infrastructure buildouts. But McGuinty didn't raise taxes." Well, the old saw: A rose by any other name is still a rose.

There are no benchmarks. There are no goals. There are no real commitments included in Bill 150, just a lofty assertion that we are going onto the green wagon; we're climbing aboard. They say they want a green Ontario, but they're remarkably shy about explaining just how they're going to get Ontario there. Now, I'm not really that surprised. If there's one thing that we have learned about this government, it is that it won't take the risk of being transparent.



Providing relevant and quantified information means that residents and stakeholders alike might turn to the government and well say: "This won't work. We don't have the infrastructure to support this pipe dream. It's too costly to consumers. You've got to have a better plan or you will jeopardize the quality of Ontario's power." Even McGuinty hasn't yet figured out how to get a good photo op out of that criticism.

So Mr. McGuinty decided that he won't bother Ontarians with relevant details such as what the power would cost and how much they would have to pay, and that he wouldn't provide any sort of guarantee that this plan will actually succeed in providing sufficient energy generation to meet Ontario's energy demands. He decided to quietly omit the fact that Ontarians would end up paying at least 30% more for their electricity, and that's if the scheme works at all. That is a very large number at a very bad time.

It's too much to expect Mr. McGuinty to be accountable for his decisions, so what do we know about this so-called plan? Sadly, the answer is, "Nothing substantial." Will the price the government sets be enough to attract investment? Can the people of Ontario afford the price that would attract investment? If the price is too low, there will be no interest from investors, and if it is too high, it will be too costly for taxpayers. But this act affords broad powers to the minister to basically do whatever it takes, and in this area, at this time, for Ontario, we cannot afford "whatever it takes." Green energy, yes; this model, absolutely not, at least not without an amazing amount of work.

No wonder Mr. McGuinty would rather avoid the issue. He needs to give his communications team extra time to figure out how to spin either of these scenarios, just in case. This is vintage McGuinty rearing its head. "Don't worry about the 'how,'" he tells Ontario, "You don't need to know."

He is wrong. We need to know exactly what we are dealing with, and we need to know it now, before we can vote on it. I am not willing to take it on faith that this government will work it out in the end. I have no reason to believe that, and Ontarians have no reason to have such faith, especially at the costs they will have to bear, with absolutely no recourse.

Not a single thing that Mr. McGuinty has said or done has inspired any kind of faith in his leadership. He has blundered through government, coasting through the good times, by fiddling with meaningless legislation while he should have been on the lookout for warning signs and preparing this province for an economic crisis. They are somewhat cyclical; sometimes they are deeper. That is the case now. I ask rhetorically if we were the least bit prepared, and I say no. And now, when the time comes to debate something that could be the difference between making and breaking our province, that could be setting a new course, he chooses to move forward with his pet projects on the backs of the very people who are trying to keep this province alive.

It once spoke in this Legislature and complained about the lack of substantive legislation to debate. Well, here it

is, and look at it. It impacts everything and everyone in the way of green power, at any cost. I said this before, I want to say it again: Tunnel vision is an unacceptable flaw in a government. And did I mention tunnel vision is an unacceptable flaw in a government? If you, as leader, are incapable of fixing one problem without bringing the province to its knees somewhere else, then it's really simple: We can't afford you any longer. You've proven over and over again that you have no leadership, you have no ideas, you have no policies to answer the challenges of the 21st century.

0920

This government is incapable of doing anything at all to help, to improve one thing in this province without sabotaging something else. It's kind of like an elephant going into a shop to buy a teacup and destroying three dozen sets of dishes in its wake. How any Liberal members are able to go back to their constituencies, look their constituents in the eye and defend this travesty of a bill, I don't understand. How you are able to tell your constituents that you are supporting this bill while you are jeopardizing their livelihoods is beyond me. "Jeopardizing their livelihoods" sounds like hyperbole—it sounds like gross exaggeration—but it's not. Every day it gets worse. One day it will level out and get better, but we haven't reached it yet, and now is the time you want to put this imposition on them. I have a hard time understanding that.

Ontarians deserve better. They deserve a real plan. Here is an environmental tip for you: If you want to be green, save paper until you have something that's worth printing on it. Bill 150 doesn't cut it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** I just want to remind honourable members that when referring to other members, we refer to them by their riding name or their title.

Questions and comments?

**M. Gilles Bisson:** Merci beaucoup, monsieur le Président, pour la chance de commenter le discours de mon ami de Montréal, qui a l'occasion de parler en français des fois ici à l'Assemblée. C'est un projet de loi intéressant. Comme il a dit, c'est un pas dans la bonne direction. Je ne pense pas qu'il y ait personne dans cette Assemblée qui dirait : « Cette direction n'est pas une bonne direction. » Je pense qu'à la fin de la journée, le commentaire que le député a fait est complètement vrai; c'est que tout le monde veut être capable de faire mieux pour l'environnement. Tout le monde est du bord de s'assurer qu'on fait ce qu'il y a à faire comme individu, comme compagnie ou comme gouvernement pour être capable d'avancer comment mieux protéger notre environnement.

Mais la question devient, est-ce que ce projet de loi nous amène vraiment dans cette direction d'une manière concrète? Je pense que c'est le point que le député essaie de faire, qu'à la fin on voit ce projet de loi qui dit, « On annonce une bonne direction », mais quand ça vient aux détails, il y manque beaucoup de détails faisant affaire avec ce qui pourrait vraiment concrétiser les actions que le gouvernement peut faire dans ce projet de loi.



Par exemple, justement, je parlais à un des députés ce matin de la question d'être capable de faire des investissements dans nos maisons personnelles faisant affaire avec l'usage de l'énergie solaire, l'énergie du vent ou autre. C'est très dispendieux. Tu parles de 12 000 \$ à 14 000 \$ pour faire cet investissement-là, et quand tu regardes ce que tu vas être capable d'économiser, soit sur l'hydro ou sur le gaz, ça ne tient pas debout quand ça vient à l'économie.

Donc, on a besoin d'avoir des programmes qui pourraient aider à accélérer ces investissements-là avec l'assistance du gouvernement, parce que chaque kilowatt qu'on est capable de conserver est un kilowatt qu'on n'a pas besoin de générer sur l'autre bord. Je pense que ce qu'on a besoin de regarder dans ce projet de loi est d'essayer de concrétiser comment être capable de mettre en place ces actions qui vont allouer aux individus d'être capables eux-mêmes de vivre une vie beaucoup plus verte.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The honourable member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** It's a pleasure to have a couple of minutes this morning to speak about the Green Energy Act. I certainly want to respond to the good member for Thornhill. He challenged us to go back and look our constituents in the eye. I'm going to tell you that for the past year I have been looking my constituents in the eye with regard to green energy and green energy opportunities.

Just the day before yesterday, I was over at the ROMA-Good Roads convention and looked in the eye the mayor of the township of South Stormont, when he once again commented on and referred to three projects in the township of South Stormont that they're chomping at the bit, as the old expression goes, to get going in my riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry. I've met with Mayor McGillis, I've met with CBO Hilton Cryderman and I've met with CAO Betty de Haan from that municipality, and I've met with developers who are anxious to get going on projects of the kind that are being referred to in this Green Energy Act. To the member from Thornhill, I can say I'll look my constituents in the eye, and I know that they're going to tell me: "Go for it. Get this Green Energy Act through and let's move on."

Yesterday I heard the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex stand here and talk about green energy opportunities in his riding and the opportunities for jobs. There will be jobs created in my riding if we can get these projects off the ground. I know that by working with Honourable Minister George Smitherman and working with these companies, we will get more jobs in eastern Ontario and more jobs in the township of South Stormont in my riding. I certainly appreciate those people who come to me with the ideas that we can go out there and support through this Green Energy Act. To the member: We have it in Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** The member, of course, did an excellent job in making the case. I think that's an appro-

priate comment from the other side. He made a wonderful case.

During the election of 2003, the Premier stood up and said, "You know, we're going to close all the coal plants. We're going to close them all by 2007." That's where he gets his information on green energy, too, I think. I don't think he quite knows what the consequences of that are.

He's talking about 50,000 jobs being created. Well, unless they hire 35,000 auditors to look after the \$200 to \$300 energy audits, they're going to fall well short of that, as they fell well short of their credibility in closing coal-fired plants. Holding the price of energy to a 1% per year increase again is closing the coal-fired plants by 2007—there's no credibility to that number whatsoever, none whatsoever. A 1% increase would be almost impossible under this plan, if we're going to have a full recovery program with this Green Energy Act, which I understand is supposed to work out that way. Unless this government is going to subsidize the cost of electricity through taxpayers, there's no way that can come to fruition.

The member from just north of Toronto—

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** Thornhill.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** —Thornhill makes an excellent point: that the credibility of this government is significantly at risk. They have proven in the past that they have been unable to live up to their promises. Of course, this government is absolutely famous for breaking promises, not the least of which was closing the coal-fired plants. Closing the coal-fired plants was something that we said was impossible during the election. They knew it was impossible, and they promised it anyway, the same as this act. It's just not going to happen.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I was listening carefully to the member from Thornhill for almost 20 minutes. At the beginning, I thought he supported the bill, when he started to talk about how he believes in green energy, and the tie he's wearing matches the ideology and philosophy. But when he started talking about the bill and said "but" and I started to listen to him, he went in a different direction. He doesn't like the bill, I guess. And you know, that's fine by us. We have a different direction. We're committed to green energy and committed to the people of Ontario, to create more jobs, to make sure all the houses in the province go with our agenda, which is a green agenda. I believe strongly that this is the right way to go.

I had the chance to listen to many people from my constituency, London–Fanshawe. They talked to me about the importance of this bill, and many people are excited to participate in these programs because they think, and believe strongly, that it's the best way to go for a greener future.

0930

I'll talk about creating jobs. There's no doubt in my mind that this bill is going to create jobs. It's going to convince and create incentives to many homeowners to



change their electricity habits and also change their furnaces and their windows, whatever they have, in order to be able to participate in this program. I believe strongly that it's the right step towards a brighter future, and I want to congratulate the Minister of Energy for bringing such an important and bold initiative forward in order to make sure the province of Ontario does not depend on coal energy or dirty energy, and for switching the whole atmosphere around in this province, to have all the people in the province participate in the mission to have a green future and green energy.

In the end, I would wish the honourable member—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. The honourable member for Thornhill has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Merci. C'est une opportunité de pratiquer mon français dans l'Assemblée aujourd'hui pour répondre à mon ami de Timmins-Baie James. I wanted to do that because he addressed me in his native tongue, and one that I share with him.

I think that there's an interesting theme developing here, regardless of whether I listen to my colleague from Halton or I listen to the members from Timmins-James Bay or Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry or London-Fanshawe, and that is that everybody here has the same goal: We want to create a greener, sustainable, renewable system of delivering energy to Ontarians. I pointed out at the very beginning that, yes, I think at this point in our history, believing in green energy and wanting to supply it and rebuild the grid and rebuild the system in Ontario is a priority. So there has never been any disagreement with that. The issue is how you're going to do it, and that's why my comments—because we're debating the bill—were negative on the "how," not the "what." We agree on the "what."

My colleague from Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry responded to my call to my government colleagues, of which he is one, to talk to constituents and see what they feel by very pointedly saying, "I've done that. There are three projects that are ready to go." I don't doubt that. There are a lot of people who want to build these projects. There are a lot of people who are waiting to hear what the return to them is if they do act as providers, as there are many, many individuals who are waiting to hear what the result is going to be in terms of how it's delivered to them and for how much.

So when I say to talk to constituents, I say talk to individuals, because, to my friend from London-Fanshawe, who says he has, I can't believe that there's so much difference between London-Fanshawe and Thornhill. My mail is very negative, and it's not because Thornhill is entirely blue and London-Fanshawe is entirely red.

It is not the "what," it is the "how."

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Thank you for this opportunity to speak on Bill 150, the Green Energy Act.

There's no more important goal than to build a vibrant and sustainable green economy and energy system in our

province. Our environmental grounds: We urgently need to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions in order to minimize the already damaging effects of climate change. Economically, we need to spawn the development of a new economy that provides decent jobs for the future, while protecting and respecting our planet.

Bill 150 calls for government investment to upgrade the electricity transmission and distribution grid to support a greater proportion of renewable energy. Few would argue with that. Bill 150 aims to create a culture of conservation by greening public buildings, improving energy efficiency standards for appliances and making energy efficiency a priority of the building code. That sounds good, too. Bill 150 seeks to ensure that renewable energy projects are environmentally sound but don't take years to get off the ground. Who could argue with that? The government says the act will spark the development of a vibrant and growing green economy in Ontario. That should be welcomed.

But apart from the good words and lofty goals, the question is begged: Will this act actually stimulate the kind of green energy transformation that our province so desperately needs for both economic and environmental reasons? The minister claims that it will, but the minister claims a lot of things. The minister claims that Ontario is a leader in green energy production, while a more objective look at the Ontario Power Authority plan suggests otherwise. In fact, OPA is very conservative in terms of its renewable energy ambitions, only aiming to achieve about one sixth of what the Green Energy Act Alliance has deemed possible.

The minister claims that Ontario is making energy conservation a priority. Meanwhile, a recent report from the Ontario Clean Air Alliance shows that for every dollar that the Ontario Power Authority spends on energy conservation and efficiency, it spends \$60 on new energy supply. The minister says that we need new nuclear plants in this province to meet our energy needs, yet group after group and expert after expert, including Dr. David Suzuki, says that Ontario can meet its future energy needs without new nuclear but through renewable energy and conservation alone. The minister says that his approach to electricity supply is balanced, yet the Ontario Clean Air Alliance recently showed that the McGuinty government is willing to spend 50 times more for a kilowatt of nuclear energy than it is willing to pay for a kilowatt of energy conservation.

So we in the NDP, and indeed all Ontarians, should ask serious questions about this legislation: Will it actually significantly increase the percentage of renewable energy in the electricity grid in Ontario? Will it significantly enhance the level of conservation and energy efficiency in the province? Will it help to reduce our reliance on polluting and non-renewable forms of power such as coal, natural gas and nuclear? Will it protect individuals and companies who are vulnerable to electricity price increases? Will it ensure that Ontario becomes a leader in manufacturing of renewable energy technologies? At this point in time, the answers to these questions are lacking.



The minister says the act will lead to a rapid expansion of renewable energy, but refuses to set any targets or timelines for the increase in green energy. The act is supposed to provide loans and perhaps grants for retrofits and conservation, but the bill has no details about how many, how much money and what will be supported. The minister says that attractive feed-in tariffs will be paid to green energy producers, but we don't know what these tariffs will be, so we don't know whether they will be high enough to spark many new green energy projects. The minister says there will be reasonable domestic content rules, but again, the proposed legislation provides no details as to the extent to which energy producers will be required to purchase components or services domestically.

The minister is quite specific about some things, like the claim that 50,000 direct and indirect jobs will be created over five years, but has done little to explain how this number is arrived at. The minister claimed that the act will lead to only very modest increases in electricity rates, about 1%, but can't say how much renewable energy will come online when or what the feed-in tariff paid will be.

There are elements to the act that on the surface make sense: the creation of an energy facilitator to support new projects; stronger building code standards; more efficient government buildings; more efficient appliances. But there is little detail about these initiatives: their scope, their cost, their impact. Many hard questions need to be answered by the government if it is to show Ontarians that the act is in fact a green energy act and not merely an act of greenwashing.

At this time, I want to address four main concerns with the bill: lack of targets for renewable energy, uncertain costs to vulnerable ratepayers and energy-intensive industries, uncertainty about the creation of jobs in Ontario and, finally, the question of public-private mix of power production.

First of all, there is the question of targets and caps. The minister said yesterday that Ontario is following the European approach of no targets or caps. He said that by paying an attractive feed-in tariff, the government is creating an open-ended opportunity for the production of renewable energy and that it is not up to the government to set limits on how much green energy is provided to the grid. But in the next breath, the minister said that 75% of Ontario energy will continue to come from nuclear and hydro. The fact is, by continuing to pursue costly, dirty, unreliable nuclear, the government is setting a de facto cap on the development and provision of renewable energy because only so much energy is needed in the province of Ontario.

The potential for renewable energy is vast. According to the Ontario Clean Air Alliance, Ontario's wind power potential is more than 10 times greater than our total electricity consumption, and Ontario's biomass potential from agricultural and municipal waste is equal to 25% of our electricity consumption. We also have untapped water power potential and can import large amounts of hydro,

if necessary, from Quebec. Despite this vast potential for renewable energy in Ontario, according to the latest OPA plan, the McGuinty government only plans to develop 8,000 megawatts of renewable energy by 2025. That's only 500 megawatts a year for the next 16 years. The renewable energy contribution in Ontario, according to the current OPA plan, will increase from 22% this year to 30% in 2016. Between 2016 and 2025, renewable energy will be flatlined. That's no renewable energy for nine years.

0940

To put this in perspective, over the next 20 years, Ontario will install less than one fifth of the solar panels that Germany has put in in one year, and in 2027 Ontario will have less wind capacity than the state of Texas already has today.

Why are other jurisdictions moving faster than Ontario when Ontario has an abundance of space for wind power and an abundance of access to the sun? Why is Ontario setting its renewable energy sights so low? The main reason is that by remaining stubbornly committed to building new nuclear plants in order to have nuclear power continue to comprise 50% of overall generation, the government is capping the growth of renewable energy.

That is the message of leading environmental groups in the province. According to Greenpeace, "The government's 2006 electricity plan caps the development of green energy so the government could meet its self-imposed target of maintaining nuclear at 50% of supply." According to the Pembina Institute, "Ontario's electricity plan actually halts construction of all new wind turbines in 2018 in order to leave space for the new nuclear reactors that the province is considering purchasing." According to the David Suzuki Foundation, "To be effective in making Ontario a global green energy leader," the government must avoid "new investments in nuclear facilities to avoid 'capping' renewables and efficiency gains due to oversupply from non-renewable sources." According to the World Wildlife Fund, "We will get a sign of the degree of ambition when we see the new" OPA "plan in March."

The bill supposedly establishes the right to connect renewable projects, but the McGuinty government is putting nuclear first and leaving only the leftover space for green energy. In other words, as much as Bill 150 might encourage new investment in and production of renewable energy, it is doomed to failure unless the McGuinty government reverses its plan to build new nuclear plants at Darlington and to refurbish its Pickering B plant and opens up space on the grid for renewable energy.

Yesterday again, the minister said that we need nuclear energy because renewable energy sources like wind and solar are unreliable and intermittent. The double standard here is interesting. Complex new generation nuclear energy plants like the ones that the Ontario government is considering are facing unresolved technical setbacks around the world. New designs from Westinghouse, AECL and Areva, the contenders for the contract



to build new nuclear plants in Ontario, are all either in prototype stages or years behind schedule in deployment. And there is no accepted safe solution for storing radioactive waste, yet this government talks of nuclear as a proven and reliable source.

On the other hand, it characterizes renewable energy as flawed, unreliable and intermittent, ignoring the fact that the storage of wind energy is now viable; ignoring the complementarity between solar and wind—wind may not blow as much on hot summer days, but the sun does shine; ignoring the vast and reliable potential of renewable energy sources such as waste-heat recycling, combined heat and power—so-called cogeneration—and biomass.

Why does the government maintain so much faith in nuclear and so little faith in renewable energy? The minister said yesterday that continuing to draw 50% of Ontario's electricity supply from nuclear plants makes it possible to pursue green energy. I think the minister has it backwards: The continued reliance on nuclear for 50% of the electricity supply for Ontario doesn't make this act viable; it does the opposite. Pursuing new nuclear energy in Ontario dooms Bill 150 to being entirely marginal, to bringing only small amounts of renewable energy online in Ontario, something that would have happened even without this bill. If the McGuinty government is serious about aggressively increasing green energy supply and conservation, it would put a moratorium on building or refurbishing nuclear plants until it at least sees what potential Bill 150 has to spark in these new renewable projects.

Even the minister's own staff has suggested, while the new nuclear plants remain on the table, that there is a need to see how this goes, and anything is possible. In other words, new plants may not be necessary if the renewable energy response to the act is strong. If the act is as great as the government suggests and if reasonable prices are paid for renewable energy, then surely it will stimulate the introduction of more than 8,000 megawatts over the next 16 years. The government can't have it both ways. It can't say that the act has the capacity to rapidly increase green energy supply and then limit it to 500 megawatts a year by giving priority to its nuclear plants.

It's not only the NDP that is concerned about lack of strong baseline targets for this green energy bill. Two University of Western Ontario professors, who interviewed 63 wind developers, also say that the act does not go far enough because it fails to include long-term targets for renewable capacity and leaves too many decisions to ministers. They say that the act does not remove investor uncertainty that has hindered investment to date because it does not establish long-term targets for renewable capacity, and instead "leaves key decisions on targets and power pricing in the hands of the minister," who can easily change policies if political priorities shift. They say that the Green Energy Act further broadens ministerial powers, exposing policy even more to political pressures.

The second key issue is about costs. Yesterday, the minister suggested that this bill would only increase

ratepayers' tax cost by 1%. If the government hasn't yet seen the price at which they will buy green energy and won't say how much green energy will come online, then how do they know electricity rates will only go up by 1%? Given the fact that the feed-in tariffs for wind and solar are two to three times higher than the cost of coal-fired electricity, how is it that the increase in hydro rates will be so low? A good question. The only way I can see that rate increases will be kept low is if the government is anticipating a very low uptake of the program, contrary to their rhetoric of turbo-charging green energy development.

Whatever the rate increase, we know that low-income people are very vulnerable to changes in expenses. We hear increasingly of people becoming homeless, not because they can't afford rent, but because they can't afford their utilities. The government says that there will be some protection for low-income people, but, again, the bill tells us little in terms of what these protections will be.

It's not only low-income individuals who are threatened by increasing hydro rates. Struggling companies in the resource sector are already being pushed out of business by high electricity rates in the province of Ontario, and they're moving out of Ontario at a drastic rate. Xstrata and AbitibiBowater are recent examples of large companies under constant pressure to move.

Electricity already costs \$72 per megawatt hour in Ontario, the second-highest in Canada. We have Niagara Falls, the biggest producer in North America for electricity. We sell it to the States.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** No, we don't.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Yes, we do.

We have many falls up north that are not being utilized. There are towns and cities in northern Ontario that could be self-sufficient with electricity, but they're putting it into the grid and then their prices go up. It doesn't make sense. The NDP has called for an industrial hydro rate of between \$45 and \$50 dollars per hour, but the McGuinty government has ignored their calls as usual.

What will be done to protect these companies from further hydro rate hikes and more job losses in struggling parts of this province? I don't know. Which brings me to a third and final concern about Bill 150: the lack of specifics around domestic content requirements needed to stimulate new green jobs in Ontario. It's true that setting a fair price for renewable energy is the key to attracting investments in green energy production, but we need to ensure that components for solar panels and wind turbines are produced in Ontario.

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I'll give you a perfect example of what the government should be pursuing in the city of Hamilton. We have National Steel Car. It's the second-biggest producer of railway cars in North America, with a workforce three years ago of 2,200 employees, mostly welders. They are now down to less than 600. The company is talking about building a new plant in Alabama and pulling out of Ontario. They've been there 100 years, the last Canadian



railway car manufacturer. Why? Because the federal government is also to blame. They are allowing these rail companies—CP, CN—to lease these cars that are built in the States, taking jobs away from Ontarians.

Here's a perfect opportunity for the minister to go to Hamilton, because I've talked to the president of the local in Hamilton and a company representative. Their plant can be retrofitted quickly to accommodate building wind turbines and other structures that would be part of the new renewable energy. They have the facility. They have the manpower. They have the transportation right there in Hamilton. National Steel Car should be utilized, and the company has expressed an interest in going to the green energy system.

We know that the act allows for regulation of domestic content quotas, but again, the levels remain to be determined. The government repeatedly cites the 50,000-person-year job figure over three years, but 16,000 jobs per year doesn't go a long way when 300,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost over the last four years. Moreover, the industry observers question whether the 50,000 target is feasible given the lack of trained workers and time to get the project off the ground.

Finally, there's the question of public versus private delivery of power. Why is the McGuinty government allowing large, private companies to produce green power while continuing to bar OPG from producing green power? How will factoring in profit margins for companies impact electricity rates? The Quebec government has made significant advances in renewable energy and job creation through a public power model. Is the government sure that a feed-in tariff model that excludes the major public utilities is the most efficient and cost-effective approach?

In summary, the NDP shares the objectives outlined in the bill for a green energy future for Ontario. We most likely will support the bill to committee, but we sure need a lot more amendments and a lot more input, and we have serious doubts as to whether the act will achieve this objective without reconsideration of government plans for new nuclear energy and without better protection against electricity rate increases.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Questions and/or comments?

**Ms. Laurel C. Broten:** I'm very pleased to respond to the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek and take the few minutes that I have before me now to put some facts forward in response to the rhetoric that we hear in the context of the debate, and reaffirm and explain our government's commitment with respect to renewables.

The facts are that Ontario has already brought about 1,000 megawatts of new renewable energy online since October 2003. More than 1,200 megawatts of renewables will be online in 2009, and that is enough to power 325,000 homes.

Investment in renewable projects already in place or under construction in Ontario totals about \$4 billion. As the member did not refer to, our minister has directed the Ontario Power Authority to review the portion of the

proposed IPSP focusing on renewable energy and conservation, because since 2003, such progress has been made in the renaissance of Ontario's energy sector, including developing a plan to get rid of coal-fired generation by 2014 while at the same time renewing Ontario's nuclear power fleet.

The amount and diversity of renewable energy sources will be examined. The viability of accelerating the achievement of stated conservation goals, the potential of converting existing coal-fired assets to biomass—all of those questions are being examined in light of the recent successes that we have had, to just reaffirm to this House that unlike the member opposite, many others do believe that this government is absolutely on the right track. We only need to refer to the editorial in the *Toronto Star* dated February 24, "Green Energy Includes Nuclear.

"The government has good reason to stick with nuclear power, which currently accounts for 50% of our electricity."

It is part of a green energy strategy going forward.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and/or comments?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** First of all, I have to say that any time my friend from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek speaks, I know that he speaks from the heart and he speaks with passion, and I admire that passion. If his speech in this debate, along with mine and those of some of the other members opposite the government who have spoken, is any indication, it's further proof that we really needed significant and fulsome hearings at this stage, before we got into a second reading debate. There are so many stakeholders who would give credibility, or take it away, from one position or the other, and it proves further that the positions are divergent.

I've talked about the lack of detail that this bill has exposed and the lack of consequences that we are able to calculate as a result of some of the elements of this bill, and have got great agreement in the words of my friend from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek. Where we differ is that our party's position is very much pro-nuclear and the NDP's position is anti-nuclear. I would argue—

**Hon. George Smitherman:** Oh, really?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Yes.

I would argue on behalf of nuclear as a part of a green strategy; however, we recognize that it's a non-renewable. I would prefer to discuss that and look to examples like France, where the majority of power is generated with nuclear facilities, rather than deal with one of the suggestions, for example, that my friend has offered, which is, "We'll import a significant amount of hydraulic power from the province of Quebec." Albeit that's possible, we have no way of knowing at this stage whether Quebec has the appropriate capacity going forward for the long term. So we have to be self-sufficient, and we saw that during the huge brownout of four or five years ago.

The bottom line here is, everybody has an idea that says "green"; everybody has a different idea of how to do it. That's why substantial hearings are required.



**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I want to say that I was listening to the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek and I agree with a lot of the points he was making. I agree with his approach, which is saying, “Listen, this is how you can make this bill better.” I think these suggestions are going to make the bill better, because that’s what we need in this. It is a huge undertaking the minister has done, and I look forward to him putting that input.

I know one of the areas I’m also interested in and something he has raised in Hamilton is, how can we ensure that these jobs in the new economy can be created in our own ridings and our own cities and towns across Ontario? I think this is really a great opportunity to do that. That’s where we have to spend our time and energy, as opposed to the old Conservatives, who just sit around saying, “Well, this should have been debated last week. This is too slow”—all these clichés about the bill, and name-calling. They’re the old protectors of the status quo, which is basically saying, “Sit around; do nothing. Everything is fine.” But we don’t have that option.

We all agree we have to take some effective, intelligent action on this front as we face climate change and issues of energy independence. This, I think, gets us toward energy conservation and energy independence, and on top of it, it creates a dovetailing into the new jobs of the new millennium. That’s where we have to go. We don’t have a choice. There is an economic, environmental imperative to do this.

So the people who talk about maintaining things and—these name-calling approaches aren’t the answer. We have to move forward, and I want to say that’s where we’re going with this.

The other thing that we’re fighting, too, is all the people who say, “Well, we’re against nuclear,” yet they’re out in droves protesting wind. They’re against the wind—the NIMBYs, you know? Then they’re against solar farms. Then they’re against natural gas-fired generation. So I tell them, by being against wind, solar and natural gas—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** At the outset, let me say that I do support a certain amount of wind power.

There are two things you have to understand about wind power. Firstly, when you build wind power, the wind doesn’t always blow, so you have to have backup power to support the wind power. Last summer, July 26, I believe, was the hottest day of the year. Ontario had about 48 megawatts of wind power available for generation. As is typical with a very hot day, the reason that it’s so hot is because there’s no wind. The same thing could be said of a very, very cold day. It’s very cold because there’s no wind to stir the air. But that July 26—I believe that’s the right date—when there were 48 megawatts of wind power available for generation, there were two megawatts being generated, because there was no wind in the province. When you build wind power,

you also have to build backup power that goes along with it.

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So not only are we looking at—I don’t know, pick a number—16 to 20 cents for wind power generation in a modern wind turbine; not only do we have to build that power, but we also have to build something in the surge area—perhaps natural gas, perhaps clean coal—in a reasonable area.

Germany is building 26 clean coal plants to back up their wind power. It’s a very green program in Germany. It’s seen to be a very green program in Germany. The NO<sub>x</sub> and SO<sub>x</sub> generated out of a clean coal plant are identical, or almost identical, to those generated out of a natural gas plant. It’s a very, very clean process.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The honourable member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I would like to thank the members from Thornhill, Halton, Etobicoke–Lakeshore and Eglinton–Lawrence for their comments.

In reference to the statements of the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, I disagree with them. She actually made an error by saying that they’ve created 1,000 megawatts since 2003. That’s probably correct; however, if you break that down, that’s about 170 megawatts a year, and falls quite short of their 500-megawatt promise in the new Green Energy Act. That’s nothing to be bragging about.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** That was a Liberal promise.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Yes, that was another failed effort.

In reference to the member from Eglinton–Lawrence, I thank him for his comments. I feel that, yes, we can work together to make this bill better for Ontario and for the people of this province. I’m glad to see that the minister is willing to work with suggestions from all parties about improving this bill, because it benefits us all and makes us a little more self-sufficient and less reliant on world economies and world energy, and we have lots here to spread out.

The comments of the member from Halton were well addressed, but he said that the backup generation—if the wind doesn’t blow, we don’t have electricity. If the green plan is effective, as the government says, we have biomass and we have gas. But I would also like to mention to the minister that maybe he should consider re-energizing the project that fell short, by the federal government in Hamilton, with cogeneration from the coke oven plants in the steel mills. They can create a lot of energy for the grid. That should be looked at as soon as possible.

All in all, I think that everybody basically wants to improve our situation in the energy sector in this province. I believe that, with some co-operation, we can do it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I’m pleased to enter the debate on Bill 150, the Green Energy and Green Economy Act, and I’m speaking in support. First, I congratulate the minister



for this bold initiative and a very important step toward a greener future.

Many speakers before me talked about different directions and raised so many questions: from the opposition, from the third party and also from our colleagues. No doubt about it, it's a very important step. It's a very complex, huge bill. It's very important for the people of Ontario.

No doubt, we have to raise so many different questions. We are introducing this bill in this House to be able to listen to suggestions from the opposition and the third party. I listened to the Minister of Energy responding to the member from the third party. He said: "Yes, I'm going to take your questions seriously. I'm going to address them one by one. As a matter of fact, I've addressed most of them, and we're going to work on all of them in order to make sure that Bill 150 serves the people of Ontario, serves our agenda and the future of this province."

Everyone around the globe is talking about climate change: talking about our effect on the climate, on the polar bears, on flowers, plants, fish and many different species around us. Many different elements in our life affect the species around us and our environment and make it warmer. That's why we're seeing a lot of crazy weather on a daily basis in Ontario and also around the globe, from floods to extra snow or less snow. Everything around us is mixed up because we throw a lot of dirt in the air, mess up our air and make it less clean and also warmer. Therefore, our duty and obligation is to do something about it. That's why this bill came about: in order to help the environment and create green energy to serve our needs for industrial and domestic use.

This debate has been around for many, many years. Every party has a different philosophy, has a different approach as to how we can act on this issue. I want to thank the Minister of Energy for coming forward with his bold initiative in order to address it in a professional and scientific manner in a very important era, when our economy is struggling and looking for some kind of stimulus initiative. I think strongly that this initiative, this bill, will create some kind of stimulus to our economy. It's going to convince so many people in the province of Ontario to reconstruct their homes and have strategies for lighting their houses and using energy. It will create jobs on construction sites, in the service industry, in installations, financing, engineering, and computing systems. In many different aspects of our economy, this bill is going to create great movement in our economy. We believe strongly that it will create more than 50,000 jobs.

This question has been asked by the opposition and responded to by our government: How can we create those 50,000 jobs and how did we come up with this number? The people I spoke with last week and this week—especially, when the Premier, Dalton McGuinty, came to London and made this announcement in our riding, London-Fanshawe, he spoke to many different stakeholders, from the chamber of commerce to energy producers and environmental groups, and all of them

were very impressed by our initiative. They thought it was a great and bold initiative toward a greener future and toward correcting the mistakes that people before us made in order to make this earth dirtier and unfriendly for the species who share life with us.

When we introduce something new, people get suspicious and ask a lot of questions about it. They get scared and have a lot of questions: How can we do it? How will it affect our lives? As you remember, when we introduced the energy bill, Bill 100, four years ago when Dwight Duncan was the minister, I served on that committee and we travelled the province of Ontario. We listened to a lot of stakeholders who raised a lot of concerns. After four years, people are very comfortable about it, especially with the smart meters, which have software to allow people to monitor their consumption of energy. Now people are happy and comfortable.

This initiative created big jobs for the people of Ontario. A big company in Kingston produces the smart meters. We are not just supplying the people of Ontario; we also supply many different jurisdictions outside Ontario. So I think it's a very important step.

Also, when we created a smoke-free Ontario, I still remember that many people from my riding, especially the restaurant owners, came to us and complained. They thought they were going to lose their jobs and it was going to affect their businesses. Many people started complaining, came to all of us from both sides of the House and complained. But look: Now it's very normal. If you go to a restaurant or coffee shop and you see somebody smoking, it's something weird and different. Sometimes when I go to different provinces or countries and go on the train, the bus, to coffee shops or restaurants and see people smoking, I feel different. I'm not comfortable, because after many years, I guess we get accustomed to it and we start to feel the positive effect on us.

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This bill, I think, is a very important step. I listened to the member from the third party speaking about his doubt about our ability to implement it. I've witnessed the Minister of Energy on many different occasions and on many different bills. I served on the social committee, and we went around the province of Ontario to discuss the bill he introduced in this House. I noticed his determination and his commitment to the project he moved and initiated. I think this bill is going to see the light. It's going to see important steps toward making sure the province of Ontario is fit and will be ready for the future.

All this talk about how we can consume energy, how we can conserve energy, how we can save on energy—I heard people talking about Germany, I heard people talking about Denmark, I heard people talk about Spain. I watched the movie by the David Suzuki Foundation. He went on a trip with his daughter to Spain, Denmark and Germany. He showed us how they utilize the wind and also the solar system in those countries and harness the electricity and feed their grids. But you know what? I've heard a lot of stories about it. You know how much a kilowatt costs in Germany? Twenty cents per kilowatt.



How much does it cost us in Ontario? Way, way, way less than that.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I want to know about London.

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** Well, yes. We're talking about our people. When we make a comparison, we have to make a fair comparison. Also, we have to remember how much Germany depends on nuclear—almost 60% to 70%, the dependency on nuclear.

If we pass this bill, I guess by the year 2025 our dependency on nuclear will be reduced by 15%. Also, we're going to create a conservation culture, and that culture is going to go across the province of Ontario. We're talking about creating jobs. I heard the minister the other day respond to the member opposite about the content of this project—at the present time, 50% content—and the future. As we go into the future, it's going to be 60% and 70% and 80% and maybe 90%. Maybe in the future, if we create that culture, it will go across the board to colleges and universities, and then many different researchers can get involved in this project. It's going to give us the ability to produce green energy tools and materials. We can expand it and sell it across the globe. I think it's a very important step.

We have an initiative in London, Ontario—myself and my colleague the Attorney General—a project we do every year. What we do is we invite so many different environmental companies, energy companies, producers of energy and people concerned about the environment to a project we call Think Globally, Act Locally. So many different stakeholders come to this event. We have it every year. It's going to come this year in April at White Oaks Mall in London, Ontario, in my riding.

People come from many different cities and small towns to visit all these shops. People talk about solar systems, wind, conservation, environmental materials. People talk about degradable cups and forks and spoons and many different products. They are things that are very important to creating that culture and educating people about the importance of protecting our environment. Also, if they take the initiative and convert their homes to be—

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Anybody from Peterborough there at that event?

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** Well, we have a company from Kitchener that also came to this area.

I also want to tell you something. Yesterday, I went to Peterborough Day. I was very impressed. I had the chance to speak to many people working in the energy field, and they were very impressed with this bill and supported this bill, trying to convince the members from the opposition party to support it because they think, with scientific evidence, this will help the province of Ontario, help the people of Ontario and create jobs in Ontario.

I think I don't have much time. I want to continue the debate in the future with more examples from my riding of London—Fanshawe. We believe we have a lot of different initiatives, we have a lot of companies, a lot of solar panel companies, that want to take advantage of this bill and also make sure all the people in Ontario are able

to participate with the government, as a whole society, to make sure the future is greener and to protect our environment. Thank you.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. It being just about 10:15 of the clock, this House stands in recess until 10:30.

*The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. John Milloy:** I'd like members to join me in welcoming Vic and Beth Degutis, who are here from my community. They're both outstanding leaders in the area, particularly in the area of education, and we welcome them to Queen's Park today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'll take this opportunity, on behalf of the MPP from Oakville and page Alexander Glista, to welcome his father, Greg; his grandmothers, Marina Glista and Marlene DeFehr; his aunts Carolyn McLellan, Joanne Luchenski and Kristin DeFehr; and his cousins John Paul Luchenski, Jada Piro DeFehr and Ben Piro DeFehr, in the east members' gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

On behalf of the constituents of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock and page Maddie van Warmerdam, we'd like to welcome her mother, Anne; her father, Mike; her sister, Jacqui, who is a former page here at Queen's Park; her grandmother, Dorothy; and her grandfather, Peter, in the public galleries today. Welcome to all of them, and to a guest of mine who will be joining me this morning in the Speaker's gallery, Nancy Sanderson Swartz.

As well, happy birthday to a couple of members. Garfield Dunlop and Randy Hillier are both celebrating birthdays today. Happy birthday to them.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I do want to introduce someone who's on the way to the House and may not be here yet. The mayor of the great gold-mining town of Red Lake, Phil Vinet, will be here shortly, so let's welcome him into the House.

## MINE TO MACE PROJECT

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I beg the indulgence of the House to make a short announcement. Later today, I will be distributing letters to all members referencing a special event taking place at the legislative precinct commencing next week. Members are aware, during this sitting period, that we have been using the province's first mace. This is because our current mace is out for a much-needed cleaning and replating in preparation for a special role in what we're calling the Mine to Mace project.

Some time ago, De Beers Canada sought to donate two diamonds extracted from Ontario's first diamond mine to the Legislative Assembly, and the concept of mounting these diamonds on our mace was accepted. The design for the diamond setting in the mace will include



one rough and one polished stone. The letter that I'm sending each of you provides more extensive detail of this Mine to Mace project and identifies the numerous organizations who have generously donated time and effort to it.

This is an especially exciting project for the assembly because the diamonds are to be cut at a site here in the legislative precinct. Commencing Monday in the north heritage room adjacent to the Speaker's office, a supreme master diamond cutter will be cutting and polishing one of the diamonds. This will mark the very first occasion on which a diamond has ever been cut in the province of Ontario.

Anyone who's interested is invited to drop by the north heritage room next week and view the historic event in progress. A camera will also be installed so that you can get a close-up view of the work being done. Once the diamond has been cut and polished and is ready to be set, it will be laser-etched with the number ONT-1-00001, signifying the finished stone as the first diamond to be mined, cut and polished in Ontario. The stone will also be etched with the Latin motto found on the assembly's coat of arms: "audi alteram partem." By way of digression, I urge all members to take note and commit to memory the translation of that motto, which is, "Hear the other side."

Upon completion of this project, there will be a ceremony in which we formally retake possession of the mace, which will now hold evidence of the ancient geological history of northern Ontario.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ENERGY CONSERVATION

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** A question to the Premier: Finally, after months of rather painful anticipation, after months of the Premier's Hamlet-like soliloquies about his desperate search for new and big ideas, and after poor Professor Florida was quietly hustled off the stage, we finally have the have-not Premier's job creation plan: a windmill in every pot and an energy inspector in every home.

Premier, do you really expect taxpayers to believe this latest fiction that further jamming up the real estate market with a new tax and an army of home energy inspectors is the road to recovery?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'm always appreciative of the thespian qualities that my honourable colleague brings to his interventions in this Legislature—very energetic.

There is no doubt whatsoever that we bring a markedly different approach to managing the people's finances and growing this economy. We have, for example, invested billions of dollars in infrastructure, creating thousands and thousands of jobs. We're building new schools, new hospitals, new roads, new bridges, new public transit

and new border crossings, but they don't support that. They don't support the thousands and thousands of jobs that come along with that. That's just one example of the markedly different approach that we're bringing to managing the people's finances and growing the economy.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I know that the Premier is doing his best, from the veranda of his Liberal-Party-owned Rosedale home, not to lose sight of the status of the real estate market in the province of Ontario. Since your last do-nothing budget, Premier, real estate prices have plummeted by double digits. What did you do about it? You whacked homeowners with massive assessment increases while the values of their homes are in sharp decline. You ushered in a new era of a Toronto land transfer tax that can add as much as \$3,500 or more to the cost of buying a home.

Now you want to give beleaguered homeowners another good, old-fashioned kick in the pants with this \$300 energy reno tax grab. Premier, in this worst real estate market in a generation, why do you want to whack people with a new tax and make every home or condo exchange subject to the whims and personal schedule of your home energy inspectors?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** A couple of things on this score: First of all, it was in their platform. I just can't understand how they now decry a policy which was specifically adopted in their platform. When the matter was introduced as a subject of a private member's bill in this very Legislature, their members voted in favour of that, but now, in the face of a little bit of opposition, they want to turn and run from this.

First of all, it's \$150 all-in. Secondly, we look forward to committee and to hearing from Ontarians on the very best way for us to implement this. It's part and parcel of a big package to create jobs in the province of Ontario, which is exactly what Ontarians want.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Premier, let me get this straight: The housing market in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario is in shambles, and you want to hit it with a spanking, brand-new McGuinty energy tax of \$300 or more, and then you want to delay home closings by at least a month, as the home inspectors do the work?

1040

The manufacturing sector has shed some 275,000 well-paying jobs due in significant part to your uncompetitive energy prices and you want to increase energy costs by an additional 30%. Did you bother talking to the folks who are going to be laid off in the construction sector, greenhouses, forges and assembly plants? You say you're going to hire 50,000 people; they're all going to be home energy inspectors.

Premier, why don't you just admit that it has nothing to do with job creation; it is simply a rough tool to plant windmills and plough wide swaths of transmission lines in neighbourhoods that don't want them?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** There are a few things that we know, and I said this yesterday but I think it's worth



repeating. With absolute certainty, oil and gas are going to go up in terms of their costs; we know that for sure. We also know that over time the cost of electricity from wind, sun, biogas and biomass are going to come down. We also know that when we buy oil and gas from Alberta, we don't create any jobs in Ontario whatsoever, but when we invest in our renewables sector and put up those wind turbines, solar farms and biogas operations, that does create jobs here. We know that as consumers Ontarians are looking to better understand what they're buying when it comes to energy efficiency associated with their particular home. It's the biggest investment Ontarians make during the course of their lifetime.

We're talking about a big package which is designed to create jobs, attack climate change and ensure that we have more access to clean and green electricity. I think Ontarians are going to embrace this.

### ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the Premier. Premier, if you owned a business that had a 41% increase in revenue over five years, but you lost some of your most talented staff, you made fewer products and you ended up deeply in the red, should the manager be fired?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** It's a bit cryptic, but I'll bring my own particular interpretation to it.

During the course of the past five years, not only have we revitalized our public services, restored confidence in our schools, in our health care, in our ability to protect ourselves by looking after the environment and things like meat and water inspection, we have also invested heavily in the growth of our economy by investing in innovation, in infrastructure, and cutting business taxes, by investing in partnerships with our businesses. Those are the kinds of things we've done during the course of the past five years. That's a good record. I think it's a solid record, and it positions us to withstand the present economic challenges that we're going through together.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I'm disappointed the Premier found those results cryptic because, sadly, Premier, that's the Dalton McGuinty record.

Since 2003, revenues are up \$27 billion or 41%, chiefly through higher taxes and increased federal transfers. As John Tory and I demonstrated this morning, you took all that money and you blew it. You chewed up every last cent in one gluttonous spending spree and now the cupboards are bare. We have 500,000 fewer cars produced than in 2003 and we've lost tens of thousands of jobs. We had 19 northern communities operating in the forestry sector a few years ago and we are now down to six. Some 275,000 well-paying manufacturing jobs are gone. Now we find out we are heading for a record massive deficit.

Premier, you must have a few bucks tucked away somewhere. If not, is this not a massive failure—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you, Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, it's no secret we part company when it comes to how we should support public services for Ontarians and how we should put our weight behind economic growth.

As I said a moment ago, we've invested billions of dollars in infrastructure, creating thousands and thousands of jobs; they don't support that. We've invested heavily in the skills and education of our workers and we have 11,000 more young people graduating from high schools every year; they don't support that. We have 50,000 more people in apprenticeship programs; they don't support that. We have 100,000 more people in colleges and universities; they don't support that. We're partnering with innovative, creative Ontarians and we've funded over 1,000 research and commercialization projects because they are creating the jobs of the future; they don't support that. I understand that.

What they do support are continuing cuts to services that families have to be able to count on, like their schools and health care. We are indeed different in terms of our approach to public services and growing this economy.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** The Premier has failed Ontario families by blowing the entire \$27-billion revenue increase and not keeping any kind of cushion to cut taxes and make key investments when times got tough. That is an extraordinary failure of leadership.

Sir, you ran this province on autopilot for five years as Canada's once-dominant province drifted into have-not status and onto the welfare rolls of Confederation. When it comes to ideas to grow us out of it, you are the have-not Premier for moving us ahead.

Now, this week, we find out you want to close down more factories by hiking energy rates and gumming up an already ailing real estate market with a brand new tax and an army of home energy inspectors.

Premier, when will you finally act? Will you bring forward a new jobs plan and a budget immediately?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** They also don't believe in cutting taxes. They say that. We're cutting them by \$3 billion for our businesses, but they don't support that.

We have done much by way of entering into new partnerships with Ontario businesses—hundreds of partnerships. Over \$8 billion worth of new investments have flowed from that, and we have some 9,000 new jobs. Again, they don't support that.

On the other hand, they tell us from time to time in the Legislature that they in fact want us to spend more on rural health care, they're going to eliminate the health premium—all kinds of irreconcilable positions they take on any one particular day.

We're proud of our record, and we are going to keep moving forward, protecting the gains we've made with respect to public services, continuing to find ways to partner with Ontario businesses, and we are going to move forward aggressively to build a stronger, greener economy here in Ontario.



## POVERTY

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. Ontarians are confused about whether or not this government is committed to achieving a 25% reduction in poverty over five years. The new poverty bill, which was supposed to enshrine a 25% target in law, instead calls success dependent on "the sustained commitment of all levels of government, all sectors of Ontario society and a growing economy." In other words, if conditions beyond this government's control are not perfect, the 25% target gets tossed out the back door.

When will this government stop making excuses, stop creating escape clauses and commit unequivocally to reducing poverty by 25%?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'm very proud of the new legislation that we've introduced in this House. You would have thought that the NDP, while they were in government, would have attempted to do something along these lines, but they chose not to.

We have put in place—and I know that my honourable colleague understands this—a target now. We have put in place a specific strategy to achieve that target. We have chosen some very real indicators that tell us whether we're making success or not; we're the first government to do that. We've committed serious dollars to ensure that we can make progress in achieving that target, but we've always said, as a government we can't address poverty on our own. We're going to need the help of the federal government, we're going to need the help of community organizations, but we are certainly going to do our part.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The Premier claims that his anti-poverty act is strong, but that is not the case. Let's compare it to Quebec's legislation, which was in fact put in place six years ago. Quebec sets an ambitious and concrete target; the McGuinty bill does not do that. The Quebec bill sets up a fund to actually tackle poverty; the McGuinty bill does not do that. Quebec has a citizens advisory committee; the McGuinty bill does not have that. Quebec requires comprehensive action on education, on incomes, on housing, on jobs; the McGuinty bill does none of that. Quebec requires action to address the causes of poverty; the McGuinty bill does not do that either.

So I ask the Premier: Why is this government putting forward a bill that is so much weaker than the one in Quebec?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I know that my colleague has her own particular perspective on this, but I think it's worthwhile considering the perspective of others as well.

1050

Here is what Sarah Blackstock of the Income Security Advocacy Centre said: "The Poverty Reduction Act is very significant because it acknowledges that poverty is not inevitable and that government can and should create policy to reduce poverty."

Adam Spence, executive director of the Ontario Association of Food Banks, said, "We welcome this new

legislation as an important step forward as it establishes an ongoing mandate for poverty reduction."

I have a number of other quotes as well, but the point is that I think a lot of folks who work on the front lines when it comes to addressing poverty know that this represents real progress. I think they know that they have a government that has put in place for the first time in Ontario a target, a strategy, indicators that we've settled upon, and we've put in place serious dollars to help us achieve progress. They also recognize that we can't do this, as a provincial government, alone. We're going to have to move in concert with our partners.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I would say the point is that this bill is thin and will not help people get out of poverty in the province of Ontario. So what we are doing is urging this government to hold widespread public hearings and seriously, seriously consider amendments to its poverty bill.

Beyond the bill, the McGuinty government has yet to show that it will make investments to really reduce poverty in Ontario. Anti-poverty groups have made it very clear: \$300 million over five years, as the government proposes, is not enough. Groups are calling for an investment of \$2.5 billion in social infrastructure and public programs in the 2009 budget as a minimum down payment to achieve the 25% target.

Will the Premier assure Ontarians now that serious investment of this order will be included in the upcoming budget, or would he prefer to list further excuses for inaction?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** We have not forgotten the poor in past budgets, and we will not forget the poor in this budget; I can tell you that.

It would be nice if we had some support from time to time from the NDP when it comes to initiatives that we take to support the poor. We've raised social assistance 9.3%; they voted against that. We've introduced a brand new Ontario child benefit that will go to \$1.3 billion annually—\$1,310 annually for 1.3 million children living in low-income families; they opposed that. We've raised the minimum wage five times; again, they opposed that. It seems that every time we introduce an initiative to help the poor, they vote against it. So I look forward to receiving their support when we present our budget in this House.

## TUITION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Again, to the Premier: Today, a report was released calling for a 25% increase in tuition fees over two years. More than 70,000 Ontarians lost their jobs in Ontario in January alone. Youth unemployment has been steadily on the rise in this province. For anyone to say that the average parent or student in Ontario can afford to pay more for necessities is completely out of touch. Post-secondary education is a necessity. More than 70% of jobs require it. In fact, the Martin-Florida report indicates that, as well.



Each tuition increase makes higher education inaccessible in this province. Will the Premier guarantee that there will be no tuition fee increases beyond the cap already set?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

**Hon. John Milloy:** I thank the member for the question.

First of all, to dispel any confusion here in the Legislature, this was not a government report. It was a report by a think tank that came out. Of course, we welcome advice from all quarters.

I'm very cognizant of the fact that all members of this Legislature want to make sure that post-secondary education is accessible to all qualified students and that finances are never a barrier. That's why I was very proud that one of the key elements of the Reaching Higher plan was \$1.5 billion in additional student assistance. Through that, we've seen investments in student aid doubled; we've tripled the number of grants available to students.

I'm pleased to say that Ontario students receive the highest amount of needs-based assistance than any other province in Canada.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I was looking for the minister to speak about the cap, so I'm going to ask again.

The state of post-secondary education in Ontario under this government is like this: We're dead last in per capita funding nationally; we have the worst student-faculty ratio, not just in Canada but in comparison to peer institutions in the United States; and we have the second-highest tuition fees in Canada.

How much worse is it going to get before this government begins making the adequate, strategic investments that Ontario colleges and universities desperately require to prevent burdening students with higher tuition fees and increased debt load?

**Hon. John Milloy:** I'm willing to admit to this House that there are challenges in the post-secondary education system, but the simple fact is that Ontario has one of the finest systems of colleges and universities in this world.

We invested \$6.2 billion, the largest investment in 40 years. What have we seen? Some 100,000 more students in our colleges and universities. In a recent ranking of the top 100 research universities on this planet, four of them were from Ontario, with the University of Toronto ranking number nine. McMaster University, from the community that she represents, was recently ranked first in the country in research intensity, a measure of research income per full-time faculty member: an average of \$308,000 per faculty member.

As I said, we're going to continue to work with our colleges and universities as they move forward.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Just two weeks ago, this Premier was hanging his hat on the knowledge economy with the Florida-Martin report, but we don't create a knowledge economy by creating barriers to accessibility

for our best and brightest in this province. The self-proclaimed education Premier and his minister should understand this basic, fundamental fact. Yet his government is systematically making sure that a better future for students and their families is out of reach financially. When will he finally commit to ensuring accessibility to post-secondary education doesn't include further tuition hikes and more crippling debt for the students in Ontario?

**Hon. John Milloy:** We've doubled the number of students who receive student aid in this province. We've doubled our investment. We invested \$1.5 billion. We have 100,000 more students who have come forward to our colleges and universities. That's our record.

What's their record? Let me tell you about their record. When the NDP got into power, they increased tuition by 50%. They cut funding. They cut funding to post-secondary institutions and they eliminated upfront grants for students.

I'll put our record up against their record any day of the week.

## ENERGY CONSERVATION

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** My question is also for the Premier. Yesterday, you dived into the past. Let me refresh your memory further. You stood in this very House during the debate on Bill 118, the hydro bill, in 1991, and you said, "We have got to question the wisdom of the minister in introducing a bill in a recession which is saying to employers and investors, 'Here comes an additional tax which we're going to tack on to your hydro bill.'" Your words then, and now your wisdom, Premier.

During times of unprecedented economic crisis, when your own mismanagement has torn Ontario down and landed our province in last place economically, you have the audacity to whack Ontarians with yet another tax, a \$300 mandatory audit. They've been hit with MPAC assessments at peak price and they are dealing with job losses and income reductions, all while our province is trying to keep its head above water. How do you justify this? How do you justify sabotaging citizens at a time when what they need is leadership in government and not more taxes?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** Certainly I want to credit the honourable member and his party opposite with instigating this very sound idea which is embedded in our piece of legislation. I know that the honourable member was a candidate in the last election and therefore ran under the Tory platform, and it said as follows: "A John Tory government will ... [require] home energy audits before every sale of a house—so that the market will reward homes which are energy efficient. This will be a signal to homeowners that they will get a return on energy investments in their homes."

On the matter of the cost, the honourable member continues to misstate this. Yes, indeed, we have said it's likely that such audits would cost about \$300. Already



the government has on offer one half towards that. And on important points of implementation, in order to have enough people certified to do this work, it will obviously take some time to phase this in across the breadth of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Number one, that was then and this is now. And number two, you love—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Order. As I reminded you earlier, I too need to be able to hear the other side, and I can't hear the other side right now.

The member from Thornhill.

1100

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** The other thing I say to the minister is, there's a difference between our carrot and his stick. Minister, your answers show that you've lost touch with economic reality. You have no clue what Ontarians are battling today, and you have no plan. You have shown no leadership. Your Premier has said, "...there is a direct correlation between Hydro's rates and our rate of unemployment in Ontario. As the rates go up, so will the rate of unemployment." Yet, you have introduced a pickpocket bill, one that will surely increase the cost of power, and your Green Energy Act attacks the last and, for most, the most significant investment of their lives. Justify pickpocketing taxpayers at this time, Minister.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** Mr. Speaker, I know you couldn't hear what the honourable member said: "That was then, and this is now." He has declared a big, fat asterisk on all of the policies they might offer up with the idea that those are for today, but tomorrow could be a whole new story.

At the heart of the matter, knowing how much energy a home uses is a very valuable piece of information. There is agreement on that. It was in their platform. It was supported in a private member's bill here. But everybody agrees that the current economic situation, and the circumstances for homeowners who might wish to sell their homes, is challenging.

Indeed, I've had the opportunity in this House and outside the House to say that as we move forward to implement this, we'll look for all inputs, from realtors, from the opposition, to do this in a fashion which is very reasonable. It will take some time to be able to do this on a standardized basis across the province and to have the appropriate array of people who are certified to do so. We'll be happy to work with the opposition on implementation details that give—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

## ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is to the Minister of Economic Development. Nortel has announced 3,200 more job cuts here in Ontario. EI claimants are up 30% year over year, with many communities up 50% or more. Over 300,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost in the

last four years. The NDP has a five-part jobs plan. Where's the government's plan?

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** It's the plan the member voted against. It's the plan that made investments in places like Mississauga-Brampton South, Vaughan, Kitchener-Waterloo, Scarborough Centre, Newmarket-Aurora and in the member's own riding; made investments in companies like 2Source Manufacturing, 6N Silicon and Agfa HealthCare; made investments in companies that will leverage into larger investments. In other words, the government jumped in and jump-started these companies to allow them to jump ahead of their competitors.

Yes, the news, amidst all these consolidation battles, can be very grim for those people facing those challenges, but there are also some success stories arising from this, and it is as a result of a plan of providing strategic funds directly to businesses in areas where we're going to have economic growth. We've been doing it and will continue to do it all across this province.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** We've done the minister a favour. We've laid out a plan that would get Ontario's economy moving again. We need an aggressive Buy Ontario program, starting with 50% Ontario content in transit and 60% Ontario content in green energy, as they do in Quebec. We need a massive transit expansion program, along with new roads, sewers, bridges, that not only puts people back to work immediately, but will lay the groundwork for jobs of the future. We need a \$10.25-an-hour minimum wage immediately to put money in the pockets of those who will spend it immediately.

The NDP has done its part. Where is the government's plan?

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** It's the plan that the member voted against. It's the plan he doesn't agree with, I suppose. But, in fact, it's got a lot of the elements of what he just described: massive investments in infrastructure—we've seen that done under the McGuinty government—massive investments in transportation. Your leader, I say to the member, was against the subway expansion. He was against it. He thought it was a waste of money, I seem to recall.

In addition to the infrastructure spending, the plan includes direct injection of investments or loans to those companies meeting the criteria in areas of economic growth, those companies showing ingenuity and innovation—and they are growing. They're companies like Héroux-Devtek, Mitchell Plastics, Agfa HealthCare, Powerbase Energy Systems and Hanwha L & C. These are companies that deserve much congratulation and success for their innovation and ingenuity, and we will continue to partner with them and support them to find ways during these consolidation—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## WASTE MANAGEMENT

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** My question is to the Minister of the Environment. Minister, there is a common tenet for



those who make use of Ontario's trails and outdoor recreation areas: "Take only pictures, leave only footprints." Ontarians are now thinking about this rule in the context of their daily lives.

We now talk about an environmental footprint and how to minimize it. We cannot avoid waste; it is an unavoidable by-product of living in a society. What we can do, however, is minimize the amount of waste we create in the first place, reuse what we can and recycle, as much as possible, what's left.

Minister, the blue box program provides a great opportunity for Ontarians to easily recycle common items like paper, plastic and glass. Through improvements, even more materials could be recycled, and the program could be more user-friendly by making the program consistent across the municipalities. What is our government doing to improve the blue box program?

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** Let me first of all congratulate this member on being such a passionate backer of the blue box program. He's indeed been a leader in his own community in that regard. Let me also say that Ontario households have embraced the blue box program, because as a matter of fact, the targets that were originally set out by 2006 were improved to 63%, two years ahead of the 60% target.

But we could do so much more, and that's why we're talking to the waste diversion organizations and basically have asked them to come up with some new recommendations that deal with such issues as to how we can reduce the amount of packaging, how we can include even more materials in blue box programs and how we can bring greater consistency between the material that's picked up in different municipals.

We want to also have the notion of extended producer responsibility be an integral part of the blue box program. We also want to expand it to such areas as industrial, commercial and—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** Ontarians want to do the right thing. They want to protect the environment for future generations. They want to minimize the negative impact they can have on the world they live in. With busy lives and time constraints, it is important that the government make it easier for Ontarians to do the right thing. As the Premier has often stated, the environment and the economy can go hand in hand. We can protect our environment and create new green industries at the same time.

It is my understanding that there are communities in Ontario that ship recyclable materials to foreign countries like China and South Korea, where those products are turned into new products that are then sold back to us. We should be building green businesses and industries here at home in Ontario. Minister, what opportunities are there for companies that could fill that role and create new green industries here in Ontario?

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** That is a concern as to what happens to these materials, indeed, not only in Ontario but throughout the world. That's why we've asked Waste

Diversion Ontario to look at some of the concerns about where the waste actually ends up. We've asked them to track the material system. We've asked them to help us promote the green economy. We want to make sure that we are working towards that zero-waste mentality.

There's some good material in everything that's out there, and anything we put down in landfill sites eventually will have to be cleaned up by somebody. The other thing that's very interesting about that is that when we remanufacture from recycled materials, about 25 times the number of jobs are created rather than by simply landfilling it. We want to make sure that we can repair and utilize the material that we have so that it doesn't end up in our landfill sites, to the detriment of everyone and to the detriment of our environment.

### LITERACY AND BASIC SKILLS

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** My question today is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Minister, you understand that thousands of Ontarians with literacy problems are losing their jobs as we speak. In the upcoming provincial election, will you take a leadership role and advocate for increased funding for community-based literacy and basic skills programs so that unemployed Ontarians can learn to properly read and write?

**Hon. John Milloy:** I want to thank the honourable member for his question. Certainly adult literacy is a great concern to all members of the House. It's estimated that we have about 3.4 million people in the province of Ontario who don't read and write at a level which would allow them to function properly in this workforce. As a government, we invest some \$75 million a year through community agencies, school boards and community colleges to offer a variety of literacy programs. I certainly thank those agencies and organizations for the fine work they do.

1110

I'm happy to tell the member that this year we have been able to give \$2.68 million in one-time funding to help with special needs amongst these agencies and organizations. We look forward to continuing to work with them as we move forward.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Thank you, Minister. As you know, basic funding for community-based literacy and basic skills programs has been frozen for over a decade. With tens of thousands of Ontarians losing their jobs every month, the badly flawed Second Career program provides virtually no assistance to those requiring help in literacy and basic skills. By your own ministry's data, there are 2.4 million unemployed Ontarians who do not have basic literacy skills for a knowledge economy.

Thousands of Ontarians are losing their jobs as we sit here today. Many will turn to their local community-based agencies for assistance in basic training and literacy. Can you inform the House that you will advocate on their behalf for increased long-term, stable funding in the 2009-10 budget?



**Hon. John Milloy:** Again I thank the honourable member for his question. I want to assure him that we will continue to work with the organizations and institutions which offer literacy programs. I do want to correct something, however, that he said in his question about Second Career: The fact of the matter is that we have ensured that Second Career has a literacy and basic skills component. An individual who comes forward and wants to seek long-term training through Second Career has the opportunity to do a literacy and basic skills upgrade of up to a year, meaning that they can actually extend the two-year Second Career program to three years. We are making sure that that program takes into account those workers who need that extra boost in order to enter into a retraining program and enter back into the workforce.

### PUBLIC HEALTH

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** Ma question est pour le ministre de la Sant   et des Soins de longue dur  e. Health units across this province do not have the resources to deliver the services mandated by the province. A third of the public health units do not have permanent, full-time chief medical officers of health and many are struggling to deliver the services they are legislated to provide. Minister, it is high time that you commit the needed resources to public health units. I ask, why is the McGuinty government neglecting public health, especially in this post-SARS era, and not enforcing its own legislated mandatory services?

**Hon. David Caplan:** If more than doubling the amount of funding for public health is neglect, I think the member needs a new definition of "neglect" in this province. Funding for public health has more than doubled, from \$233.4 million in 2003-04 to \$680 million in 2008-09. In fact the way public health, as the member should be aware, was previously downsized was by New Democrat and Conservative governments.

Because of the efforts of this Premier and this government, we have uploaded the cost of public health from municipalities, increasing the province's share for mandatory programs from 50% to 75%—a 96% increase in support to local public health and mandatory programs. In fact, the challenge the member mentioned earlier about full-time chief medical officers of health is a longstanding one. We believe that our recent—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** I do know that there has been a significant increase in the funding of the public health units, but 100 residents who met in Owen Sound this week are still concerned about the services provided by the Grey Bruce Health Unit. The health unit has closed some satellite offices and cut nursing positions. They have cut mandatory services in family health, in reproductive health—including one close to my heart, the breastfeeding initiative. They have cut services in communicable diseases, including reportable diseases. They have cut sexual health and community injury prevention.

In January, the Ontario Nurses' Association asked the minister to appoint an assessor under section 82 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act to investigate the status of mandatory services in the Grey Bruce Health Unit. My question is, will the minister listen to the people of Grey-Bruce and appoint an assessor?

**Hon. David Caplan:** I'm glad the member acknowledges that resources have gone to increase the funding for public health units—in fact, in Grey-Bruce, that the member mentions, from \$3,457,000 to over \$8.5 million. That's a 60% increase in funding to this unit.

The Ontario Nurses' Association and the Ontario Public Service Employees Union have requested to conduct a review of the Grey Bruce public health unit.

It's not the practice of the Minister of Health to get involved in labour and management conflicts. I can tell you that it is the duty of boards of health to ensure the provision of health care program services, as required under the Health Protection and Promotion Act. Part of this responsibility includes setting priorities and determining the appropriate allocation of its resources.

I'm going to continue to monitor the situation—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

### CITY OF TORONTO

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** My question is for the Minister of Culture. Minister, a vibrant cultural experience is quickly becoming recognized as an important contributor to a successful international city. In a recent issue of Foreign Policy magazine, the best global cities were ranked according to a variety of important factors, including the level of diverse attractions for international residents and travellers. This includes everything from how many major events a city hosts to the number of performing arts venues a city boasts. Only one Canadian city placed in the top 10 global cities, and I, like other members from Toronto, am pleased that Toronto was ranked 10th in the world.

Can the minister tell this House what cultural attractions helped make Toronto one of the best cities in the world?

**Hon. M. Aileen Carroll:** I join with my Toronto colleague from Scarborough-Rouge River in celebrating this event. Indeed, I'm delighted that Toronto was ranked a global city. I think it's really important to know that it was ranked the fourth-best global city for cultural experience, just tucked in behind London, Paris and New York. Toronto is in elite company.

The government's \$123-million investment to renew six of Ontario's cultural institutions really contributed significantly to Toronto's cultural renaissance. The ROM Crystal has been named one of the seven new wonders of the world; an elegant new home was built for the Canadian Opera Company; and most recently, the AGO was transformed by Frank Gehry into an architectural jewel. All of this contributes to making Toronto a vibrant, fabulous place to come.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?



**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** Minister, in the aforementioned issue of Foreign Policy magazine, global cities were ranked based on a myriad of criteria. You shared with our colleagues how Toronto's cultural assets helped the city score well. However, Toronto scored highly in other areas besides cultural institutions. In fact, labour-market mobility and the city's ability to integrate newcomer populations are seen as major assets in the global marketplace and a source of competitive advantage. According to Foreign Policy, people living in cities such as Toronto enjoy a high quality of life—and attract worldly people and offer cultural experiences to spare.

Minister, Ontario is home to people from all over the world, and many make Toronto their first residence upon entering Canada. Would the minister tell us how the Ontario government supports newcomers—and in your experience, is this expertise recognized around the world?

**Hon. M. Aileen Carroll:** I'd like to refer the supplementary to my colleague the Minister of Citizenship.

**Hon. Michael Chan:** I want to thank the minister for sharing the time with me.

Toronto, Ontario, welcomes immigrants. Since Confederation, countless immigrants have come to Toronto and called it home. In addition to bringing their language, culture and beliefs to Canada, newcomers bring their talents, expertise and investment.

Newcomers choose Toronto as their home for its strong business climate and cultural institutions, but most of all, its welcoming atmosphere, where diversity is celebrated as a strength.

In fact, during my time as Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, I have met ambassadors and consuls general from Ireland, Serbia, Portugal, the United Kingdom, Korea, China, Pakistan, India, Russia and Switzerland. Toronto is truly a global city.

I am pleased that Foreign Policy magazine—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

1120

## BUTTONVILLE AIRPORT

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** My question—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. I see a minister with his hand cupped trying to hear. I would appreciate all the members listening and being all ears.

Member for Thornhill.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Thank you, Speaker.

My question is for the Minister of Transportation. As the minister is aware, the future of a vital part of York region and the GTA is in peril. Buttonville airport, a key component of York's infrastructure, is at risk of closure due to an ill-considered Greater Toronto Airports Authority decision to cancel its capacity maintenance agreement, a loss of \$1.5 million annually to Buttonville. Without those funds, Buttonville airport cannot survive.

Buttonville is second only to Pearson International Airport in handling air traffic in this region and it in-

cludes air ambulance, police surveillance, media services, commercial cargo, corporate aviation, charters and private aircraft. As you see, jobs are at stake and so is a vital lifeline for York region.

Minister, what are you prepared to do to support this integral part of York and the GTA?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I'm glad the member asked the question and I thank him very much for bringing this to my attention. It was interesting that at the ROMA conference—the rural Ontario municipalities conference—this was raised with me. I met, at that time, with what I call the ministry's air advisory panel and that very issue was raised. This airport provides a very vital service for the people not only in the Toronto area but beyond the Toronto area, and I think it was an ill-conceived decision on the part of the Greater Toronto Airports Authority to end the subsidy which it was providing. Minister Chan as well approached me with this, you've approached me with this, the air advisory panel, and it is my intention, as a result of meetings I had, to raise the issue with the Minister of Transport of Canada, with a view to applying pressure to the GTAA to restore that particular subsidy.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** In my view, these extraordinary times demand extraordinary measures, and I would like to think that the Greater Toronto Airports Authority, which runs Pearson, the biggest economic sinkhole in the airport world, would understand the integral piece that Buttonville represents to an already sparse Toronto aviation system. I urge you to review this file, as you've said you will, consider York region's growth and invest in the future of the central 905. Buttonville is very crucial to York's economic success, so I would ask the minister if he will commit to a multi-year contractual support agreement, either through his good offices with the federal government or from Ontario coffers.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I know, since my friend from Niagara West—Glanbrook is sitting in front of you and asked us to save money and not spend money, you're probably suggesting that I make representations to the federal government, which has much more access to funding than the provincial government and has jurisdiction largely for airports, and I'm pleased to do that.

I think the member has raised a very good question. I think there should be a public debate about this. I'm willing to meet with the airport officials themselves to discuss this matter and I'm willing to go to bat, as I know he is, Minister Chan is, the air advisory panel of the Ministry of Transportation—we're all prepared to go to bat for Buttonville airport because we agree that it is a very vital transportation link here in Ontario. So I give him that assurance that I will pursue this matter vigorously.

## PROPERTY TAXATION

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** My question is to the Premier. There's more and more evidence that something is critically wrong with MPAC property assessments. An analysis of 47 MPAC assessments in my own riding



showed everything from assessments that were 50% above where they should be, to 30% below. Premier, assessments that are as much as 50% higher than they should be will force seniors out of their long-term homes and away from family and friends. Will you finally admit that MPAC is fundamentally broken?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

**Hon. Jim Watson:** As the honourable member knows, an increase in assessment does not necessarily mean an increase in taxes. That's the fundamental principle of the assessment system. The second thing is that the McGuinty government has brought forward a series of recommendations brought to our attention by the Ombudsman and we have implemented virtually all of those recommendations, as he laid out in his report. Furthermore, we also brought in a new system of phasing in the assessment increases over a four-year period so it is not as harsh on the individual property taxpayer. And finally, we did bring about a senior citizens' property tax grant program that the honourable member voted against in the last budget.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** To the minister: An increase in assessment almost always leads to an increase in taxes. MPAC is broken and needs to be fixed. But the extreme volatility we're seeing is present in any market-based assessment system such as Ontario's. The NDP believes that seniors shouldn't be forced out of their long-time homes by the arbitrary volatility of property markets. That's why we proposed our freeze-till-resale model.

Will you commit to freeze-till-resale today, or will you continue to allow seniors to be forced out of their homes by a deeply flawed assessment model?

**Hon. Jim Watson:** The honourable member's proposal would create this patchwork quilt where one individual with exactly the same house would have a completely different assessment than their next-door neighbour. That is not fair to individuals moving into a particular neighbourhood.

We also understand—because there is from time to time extreme volatility with the assessment system, that's exactly why this government brought in a four-year, phased-in approach to try to give some greater comfort to those individuals who happen to see a particularly high spike in their assessment. It's also why we understand—I have a number of senior citizens in my riding of Ottawa West—Nepean, and this government understands that we have to bring in programs that are going to give those people some help to allow them to stay in their homes. That's why we brought in the senior citizens' property tax grant. I would ask the NDP why they voted against the senior citizens and why they voted against the property tax grant program that helps the people that they purport to want to help.

#### HOSPITAL SERVICES

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** My question is addressed to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. As part of

its plan to improve emergency room wait times in our hospitals, the ministry has set provincial targets for the time spent in ER. Just last week, it started to report publicly the time that Ontario residents spent waiting, on average, in the emergency rooms of their hospitals.

This list, publicly released, shows that the Church Street site of the Humber River Regional Hospital, located in York South—Weston, has reported high wait times for patients with complex conditions requiring more time for diagnosis, treatment or hospital bed admission. Improving ER performance is one of our health care priorities. Our ministry has also very recently announced a \$109-million comprehensive ER strategy.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, how will this strategy help the hospitals improve their performance and help Ontarians spend less time waiting in the emergency room in their area?

**Hon. David Caplan:** I'd like to thank the member from York South—Weston for her question and also for her advocacy on behalf of her constituents. My honourable colleague is quite right: Improving ER wait times is a major priority for myself and for this government. That's why we launched a comprehensive \$109-million ER strategy. It's a strategy that recognizes that there is a multiplicity of factors that affect ER performance. The strategy includes nearly \$40 million for a performance fund to target Ontario's 23 poorest-performing emergency rooms with IT enhancement and coaching teams to enhance hospital efficiency. It includes nearly \$39 million for increased home care, personal support and homemaking services, and enhanced integration between hospitals and community care access centres. It gives Ontario's 14 local health integration networks \$22 million to invest in local solutions for their ALC pressures.

I'm confident that this strategy will deliver some great results for Ontario ERs. And because we're now—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** Improving emergency care does require making improvements across the entire system. These investments and initiatives in a number of areas of our health system will help to provide Ontarians with alternative options and help them receive the high-quality, prompt assistance that they expect when they need to visit their hospital's emergency room.

These investments also help our hospitals excel in a number of different areas. Humber River Regional Hospital, for example, is considered a bariatric centre of excellence for the services it offers to patients struggling with severe obesity.

Minister, the government announced this week that it will be improving access to bariatric treatment. Could you please explain what this expansion will mean for the residents of Ontario who require such services?

1130

**Hon. David Caplan:** I again thank the member for the question because, as health minister, preventing and managing the spread of chronic diseases is one of my top priorities. That's why I launched a comprehensive



diabetes strategy this last summer; that's a \$741-million investment. Increasing access to bariatric surgeries is part of that strategy.

We're devoting \$75 million over the next three years to increase bariatric surgery capacity in our province by some 500%. Humber River Regional Hospital, in the member's riding, is one of the hospitals that will benefit from this investment. Currently it has the capacity to perform 57 surgeries each year, but by 2011-12 it will perform up to 330 bariatric surgeries annually. Humber River Regional has been a bariatric centre of excellence since 2007. The centre provides pre- and post-bariatric surgical care, counselling, referral and weight loss treatment. The centre is delivering, by a—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

### HOSPITAL SERVICES

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** To the Minister of Health: Oakville, as you will know, is one of the fastest-growing towns in Canada, and the current hospital is busting at the seams. Last June, your predecessor announced that there would be a one-year delay on the construction of the new hospital. To get that important project up and running as quickly as possible, Minister, will you allow the request for qualification of builders to go forward?

**Hon. David Caplan:** I know very well that Infrastructure Ontario is working with the hospital in Oakville, Trafalgar Memorial, to get this project on track as quickly as we possibly can. It's with tremendous regret that there was any delay, and it was simply because we have put so much work on to the market that there is a need to match up the capacity to deliver the project with the ability and all that's out there. I know that the folks at Infrastructure Ontario are working with John Oliver and the board, and we will be moving ahead with the requests, as has been laid out by Infrastructure Ontario, for qualifications—later on for RFPs. I very much look forward to working with my colleague opposite and with the member from Oakville, Kevin Flynn, to be able to get shovels in the ground and see that much-needed project delivered as quickly as we possibly can.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** That should have been done a long time ago.

Milton is the fastest-growing community in Canada and submitted a business plan for the needs of a Milton hospital expansion to your ministry last September. Your ministry has been sitting on them since last September, and they can't proceed with a functional design program until that approval takes place.

That hospital in Milton was built for a population of 30,000 people. The current population in Milton is 75,000 people, two and a half times greater. Before the hospital can be expanded, the population of Milton will be 116,000 people, being serviced by a hospital built for 30,000 people. Minister, will you approve the business plan for needs for the Milton hospital with all possible haste?

**Hon. David Caplan:** The member in his question says that these things should have been done long ago. I couldn't agree more. But unfortunately, when that member sat on this side of the House, he did not lift a finger whatsoever to get these projects moving ahead. Regrettably—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I ask the honourable member to listen to the answer, please.

**Hon. David Caplan:** It took Kevin Flynn and Dalton McGuinty and the effort of this government to get over 100 hospital capital projects moving forward. I'm very proud of that achievement.

I say to the member that I am aware of the pressing needs in Milton and in other places around the province. We are working with my colleague the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure as he puts together the next iteration of that capital plan. I know he has the support of the finance minister for a 10-year, \$60-billion infrastructure investment. I will say to the member that no decisions—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

### ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is to the Minister of Agriculture. Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock NDP candidate Lyn Edwards is hearing from cattle farmers struggling with high costs, like surging feed prices, while beef prices are so low that they're being compared to the Great Depression. OMAFRA's program has supposedly addressed the problem; the Ontario cattle, hog and horticulture payment program just isn't working. The program's eligibility criteria leave too many ineligible, particularly young farmers. Those who do not qualify receive payments that are far too low to get by on. Before more cattle farmers are put out of business, why won't the minister commit to expanding eligibility and increasing the safety net payment?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** Well, I think that it's important to correct, for those people who listened to the question, that the cattle, hog and horticulture payment is not a program. It was a one-time ad hoc payment. We listened very carefully to our stakeholders, who indicated that because of some long-standing hurt in the industry, they needed some one-time help. We provided that to them. We used the same formula that the federal government had used previously for their federal cost-of-production top-up. By the way, Ontario was the only province in Canada to provide this type of payment to cattle, hog and horticulture producers. We know that other producers across Canada were envious of that.

Is there more to do—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Cattle farmers are hurting and they are worried about the future of their family farms—and the minister laughs. They need a partner in government to help share the market risk, to ensure Ontarians get



locally grown, safe, healthy and affordable food for years to come.

The NDP have proposed a grow-Ontario plan that would generate and guarantee farmers a reliable, bankable level of income year after year, a reasonable insurance plan for troubling times. Given that this government's program isn't working, why won't the minister introduce an insurance program to provide reliable annual funding to all farmers who are struggling to get by?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** What we have heard from farmers in the province of Ontario is that they want to get their money out of the marketplace and not out of the mailbox. That is why our government has invested in the Buy Ontario/Pick Ontario Freshness campaign. Farmers believe that when Ontarians understand, by preferring Ontario farm products—that will make farmers the winner and it will make the people of Ontario healthier, it will reduce their environmental footprint, and it will be good for rural communities.

We listened to farmers. This is what they said they needed. We have embraced it, and thankfully Ontarians have as well. There is now a greater awareness and there is a wave going over Ontario to pick and prefer locally grown, quality agriculture products from Ontario.

#### CORRECTION OF RECORD

**Hon. David Caplan:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: During my answer to the member from Nickel Belt, I think I said \$3.4 million. In fact, it was \$345,000—I missed a decimal place—and \$850,000. I just wish to correct my record.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The time for question period has ended. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1138 to 1300.*

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'll take this opportunity to welcome a class that will be visiting Queen's Park today: Davenport Public School from my riding in Aylmer, Ontario.

#### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

##### RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ENERGY CONSERVATION

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I take this opportunity to make a statement on Bill 150, the Green Energy Act. I'm reading from a letter from a constituent of mine, who said that Mr. McGuinty's Green Energy Act is taking away the currently legislative review process that allows input from individuals and local government regarding new energy projects. What will be next? This is a major step backward in our democratic rights. Who knows what will

be next on their agenda? He says: "I trust you will do everything possible to prevent this erosion of civil liberties. There is a right way and a wrong way for Mr. McGuinty to further this green plan. Let's do it the right way." This was in the Sarnia Observer.

Among a number of the other comments I had was—commenting again from a couple of articles, "Bill 150 is long on framework but short on substance"; "Solar power in Ontario will cost 42 cents per kilowatt hour." We know that existing electricity that's generated from coal power is around a nickel, so these people are commenting: Where's the price of energy going to go in this province?

In conclusion, the McGuinty Liberals have too many hands in our pockets. After this bill is imposed, if it is, people will say, "What's in your wallet?" Like in the Capital One commercials, again, the answer will be, "Nothing, nada, zilch, zippo."

#### TEACHERS

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** I rise today to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the men and women who educate our young kids. These fine teachers spend countless hours making sure our children understand important subjects such as history, science and math, just to name a few. These teachers also educate our children on healthy eating habits.

Just recently, I was contacted by a hospitality teacher by the name of Lars Skjold-Pettersen, who brought to my attention an important program that he would like to start at St. Roch Catholic Secondary School, which is opening up in my riding in September. Mr. Skjold-Pettersen would like to make this school a "fried-free school." What that means is that the school cafeteria would not be serving fatty foods, such as french fries and pizza, and would instead be serving healthy foods, such as green salads and vegetables.

It's the responsibility of our government, our school boards and our local communities to encourage these types of initiatives. Our children need to learn from an early age to eat healthy. Healthy eating habits will only benefit them in the future.

I thank Mr. Skjold-Pettersen for his enthusiasm and strongly support his new initiative.

#### ISRAEL APARTHEID WEEK

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Prior to the winter break, I rose in this House to discuss Israel Apartheid Week because it was not then certain that we'd be returning here prior to that event. As it turns out, we did so, and Israel Apartheid Week begins on Monday.

I said that, as Canadians, we have a proud history of advocating for an end to apartheid in South Africa, and we condemn the human rights violations committed then. Trivializing that struggle by equating it with any action by the state of Israel is inaccurate at the very least and highly objectionable to any fair-minded Canadian, to be sure.



In Canada, we encourage informed debate because it may one day be the foundation for solutions to problems we haven't yet solved. Universities should be the heart of that debate, but never the site of physical intimidation or threat of violence, which we witnessed at York University several weeks ago involving supporters of Israel confronted by supporters of certain Palestinian positions.

Today, I call upon those responsible for security of students on all Ontario campuses during Israel Apartheid Week, indeed at all times, to make certain that debate is never stifled, that Canadian hate laws are always respected and that no one engages in physical intimidation to underscore opinions.

I also repeat on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus, that I deplore any equation of Israel with an apartheid regime and ask for all members of this Legislature to join us in condemning Israel Apartheid Week.

### PROPERTY TAXATION

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I rise today to speak about MPAC. MPAC is not working. Our property assessment system in this province is not only not working, but it's working to the detriment of many of our seniors and small business people.

We packed Swansea Town Hall last week with those who had problems with the MPAC system in my riding, and we're going to continue to do that across the riding. Next week it's going to be Humbercrest Public School, where residents are going to come out, bring their assessments, many of them up to 50% too much; many of them up to 30% too little. Clearly, the system is not working.

A wonderful man in our riding, a retired university professor and statistician, has done a very measured survey. He's discovered that in 47 houses that sold at market value, not one was correctly assessed by MPAC. We, in the NDP, are urging that this government adopt a freeze-till-resale model. It works excellently well in California and other jurisdictions, and would replace this fatally flawed system.

The minister today rose in this House and said that just because you've got an increased assessment, it doesn't mean increased taxes. I would ask, what does it mean if it doesn't mean increased taxes? Certainly that's what increased assessments mean for most people.

### EVERGREEN HOSPICE

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** Last Friday evening, I attended the Evergreen Hospice Gala in my riding of Oak Ridges—Markham. The purpose of this event, consisting of a wonderful evening of dinner and entertainment, was to raise public awareness and funds for Evergreen Hospice and its important palliative care initiatives in the community.

First established in 1989, Evergreen Hospice helps residents of the towns of Whitchurch-Stouffville and Markham deal with life-threatening illness, death and bereavement. Various services are offered, including individual counselling and grief support groups.

Evergreen Hospice has long had a profound impact on the community. Each year, it supports about 200 active clients, and over 400 people attend its support groups. A non-profit organization, it has received funding from various sources, including grants from the Ministry of Health, the Ontario Trillium Foundation and donations from individuals, community organizations and businesses. Last week's gala and Hike for Hospice, another event I attended earlier this year at the Stouffville Reservoir conservation area, are also important sources of funds.

I wish to recognize the value of hospice services in the health care system, and I commend the tremendous efforts of the volunteers and staff from Evergreen Hospice, who make all their services possible.

### RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ENERGY CONSERVATION

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** An Ode to Power:

Here we have the Green Energy Act,  
Heavy in words, light in facts.  
The cost to the people, not exact  
Hidden taxes, piled and stacked.

The Premier says, it won't be a lot,  
But taxpayers are wary and distraught,  
Because they have not yet forgot  
Similar promises, all worth squat.

Not long ago, we saw this show.  
He said the coal plants had to go  
He said he'd clean up Ontario  
But then did nothing, quid pro quo.

Green energy, we all agree,  
Will lead to green prosperity.  
The problem is credibility  
'Twixt what they say and what we see.

And what incredulous audacity  
That the Premier, simultaneously,  
Talks of reducing poverty  
While slapping the poor with another fee.

Municipal leaders want their say  
To represent citizens in a regional way  
But they've been told to stay away  
It's a power grab, plain as day.

And what other hidden agendas are here?  
They won't be forthright, upfront or clear.  
These are mysterious numbers as they appear  
All doctored up by this shift Premier.

The Green Energy Act, they call it "bold"  
But we've seen it before, we know how this unfolds.  
This song and dance is getting old,  
It's not about green, just taxpayers' gold.

### MINOR HOCKEY

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** I rise in the House today to pay tribute to a hockey team from my riding of Northumberland—Quinte West. The Cobourg Scotiabank midgets captured the International Silver Stick championship in Sarnia recently.

I'd like to pay special recognition to the Cobourg Community Hockey League and the people behind the scenes who make things tick. It's important to take time to recognize the value and importance of these volunteers. Their contribution, along with all those of volunteers in our communities, makes my riding a great place to live. The selfless dedication of these folks is an inspiration to us all and their commitment has enriched the lives of our children and their families. Thank you for choosing to make a difference.

1310

Because of time constraints, I cannot name all the members of this championship hockey team, although I congratulate each player on their accomplishments. But I will quickly congratulate the coaching staff of the Cobourg Midgets, namely head coach Rick Palmateer, assistant coaches Josh Lewis and Wilf Venema, trainer Rod Curtis and managers Kent Adams and Ken Litton.

This team represents the best of our hockey traditions and they are excellent ambassadors for their town. I join with the citizens of this community and all the members here today in commending you for the energy and determination which you have invested in this championship.

I look forward to updating you in the upcoming months with further championship news from my riding as minor hockey playoffs wrap up across this great province.

### CITY OF TORONTO

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** I rise in the House today to remind all Ontarians of what a wonderful place Toronto is to live, work and play. In our busy lives, we rarely take time to celebrate the diversity, culture and sense of community that the wonderful citizens of Toronto create. This diversity and sense of community is evident in various neighbourhoods where one can sample wonderful cuisine, hear live music, and purchase unique wares from countries around the world.

The size and scope of such a large city also present a unique challenge. The McGuinty Liberals have responded to these challenges through a strong financial commitment in a number of areas to make Toronto an even better place in which to live.

Some of the highlights include the following: Through uploads outlined in the provincial-municipal review, Toronto will see a \$400-million-per-year net benefit by the time the uploads are completed in 2018. Also, \$238 million through the Investing in Ontario Act will go directly into improving Toronto's infrastructure, and \$32.2 million under the provincial Best Start program to sustain and create 925 new child care spaces.

These investments underscore the McGuinty Liberals' commitment to municipalities around the province and to ensuring that Toronto continues to be a wonderful place for both visitors and residents alike.

### CUPE

**Mr. Monte Kwinter:** Ontario is seen around the world as a beacon of acceptance, inclusiveness and diversity. These principles are the foundation of our prosperity and are reflected in both our legal statutes and our countless institutions.

This diversity is greatly reflected in our unions. Organizations like CUPE represent nationalities, ethnicities and religious denominations from countries around the world. Their leadership should not discriminate or exclude members based on any of these aspects. This respect gives them the ability to speak with a single and unified voice that unites rather than divides members in pursuit of workers' rights.

CUPE's recent announcement to boycott the state of Israel in light of the ongoing conflict and denounce contributions from select areas of study is personally concerning. It goes against the spirit of academic freedom they support and the union members that they represent.

CUPE has put its long-standing tradition of championing acceptance and inclusiveness in the workplace and amongst its membership at risk. These principles need to be respected regardless of one's country of origin. We can all agree that diversity is our strength and that our province is stronger when we all work together.

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Mr. Colle assumes ballot item number 5 and Mrs. Sandals assumes ballot item number 23 on the list drawn January 28, 2009.

### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

#### MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** This Saturday, February 28, is the 10th annual International Repetitive Strain Injury Awareness Day. The goal of this special day is to raise awareness of the debilitating nature of repetitive strain type injuries and the ways to prevent them. As an avid athlete, I can attest to the impact that repetitive strain injuries can have on the body and one's performance. I can also attest to the fact that with appropriate precautions, they are avoidable.

Each year, we mark Repetitive Strain Injury Awareness Day to promote avoidance of such injuries, which,



while they may be not be life-ending, can be painful and life-altering.

At the Ministry of Labour and throughout Ontario's health and safety system, we use a broader term: musculoskeletal disorders, or MSDs for short. This term describes injuries brought on not only by repetitive work, but also by forceful exertions, awkward postures, vibration and other physical causes. Regardless of what we call them, preventing such injuries is always better than trying to cure them after the fact. In fact, these injuries are entirely preventable. That's why the Ministry of Labour launched its pains and strains campaign back in 2006 to increase awareness of this type of workplace hazard.

From 2003 to 2007, MSDs resulted in direct-claim costs of more than \$640 million, and resulted in an estimated six million days lost from work. During this time, Ontario succeeded in decreasing the rate of all lost-time injuries, including those related to repetitive strain, by 22%. However, during this same time period, the MSD lost-time injury rate decreased by only 15%. Despite this decrease, MSDs accounted for 43% of all lost-time injuries in Ontario in 2007, up from 40% in 2003.

These injuries are taking a tremendous toll, both in human and financial terms. They are the number one reason for lost-time injury claims reported to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board. They result in billions of dollars in direct and indirect costs to employers, and they result in untold pain and suffering for Ontario workers. We must do better than this, and indeed, we can do better.

Ontario workers and employers have a number of resources to help protect workers against often painful MSDs. The musculoskeletal disorder prevention guideline for Ontario and its accompanying resource manual tool box, and a website filled with MSD prevention resources, help to fulfill Ontario's commitment to reduce workplace MSDs. The musculoskeletal disorder prevention tool box released last year contains information sheets, sample surveys, hazard identification tools, and control strategies. The website contains hundreds of sector-specific examples of how MSD hazards can be eliminated or controlled through innovative designs and workplace practices. The guideline provides workers and employers with a framework for preventing musculoskeletal disorders. The resource manual provides in-depth information on implementing the guideline. It also provides information on understanding and recognizing hazards in the workplace that can result in MSDs and advice for addressing and controlling them.

These publications have been written by health and safety professionals like the Occupational Health and Safety Council of Ontario, with input from employers and labour stakeholders. These partners are the Ministry of Labour, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, the Institute for Work and Health, and the health and safety associations.

The Ministry of Labour and its partners continue to enforce workplace legislation, raise awareness of hazards,

produce resource documents, train workplace parties, and research the issue of MSDs and how to prevent them. The ministry's occupational health and safety inspectors focus on education and prevention during their workplace visits. Most Ministry of Labour occupational health and safety inspectors have received training in ergonomics. Employers are responsible, under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, to take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances to protect the health and safety of their workers. This includes protection from workplace risks that could lead to musculoskeletal disorders. Ministry inspectors and ergonomists issue orders under the act and regulations for ergonomic assessments and related preventive measures.

1320

In a few weeks, the Ministry of Labour inspectors will enhance their field activity with respect to MSD prevention by initiating an MSD blitz. This blitz is one of a series of highly focused inspections conducted under the Safe at Work Ontario program that helps workers and employers anticipate workplace hazards and correct them before those injuries occur.

Inspectors won't be addressing all potential MSD hazards in the workplace. They will be working according to specific guidelines. The MSD blitz will focus on tasks within the industrial, construction, mining and health care sectors with high risk potential for producing these MSDs.

We truly believe in prevention. Our government is committed to reducing MSDs in Ontario. Of course, there remains much more to do. One MSD is one too many, especially when you consider that MSDs are entirely preventable. In sport, play or work we must understand and respect the limits of our bodies. By optimizing our working conditions, we can maximize our true potential.

We must continue creating positive change. We must continue to promote a culture of prevention. If we work together, we can achieve our goal of a safer, healthier workplace for all Ontario workers.

## HEART MONTH

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** February is Heart Month, and heart disease remains the leading cause of death in Canada. As I rise in this House today, I am compelled to remind all Ontarians that more than 40% of Canadians will develop heart disease in their lifetimes. We can change these dire statistics. A healthy heart matters to good health. Every year, heart disease and strokes are responsible for one in three deaths in Canada.

Heart disease is preventable. In fact, 80% of heart disease can be avoided by being active every day, eating healthy foods, being smoke-free and managing stress.

During Heart Month and all year long, in fact, the McGuinty government continues to work on providing access to programs and services in order for Ontarians to improve their own heart health. One of our key partners in improving heart health is the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario, a volunteer-based health charity



whose mandate is to eliminate heart disease and stroke through research, advocacy and the promotion of healthy living.

This month alone, I participated in heart health events designed to encourage Ontarians to have their blood pressure checked regularly and to be winter active to strengthen their own hearts. These are some key steps to better heart health.

The McGuinty government continues to educate Ontarians about preventing heart disease through the Ontario heart health program. These community-based initiatives focus on risk factors for heart disease and other chronic disease, including obesity, high cholesterol, unhealthy eating, diabetes, smoking, high blood pressure, physical inactivity and poor air quality.

To a great extent, many current health conditions are rooted in the way we live and the choices we make every day. As the Minister of Health Promotion, I encourage Ontarians of all ages to make healthy choices every day to prevent disease by raising awareness of risk factors, educating Ontarians about staying active and eating healthier and providing healthy initiatives. We continue to work toward improving the health of all Ontarians. Through supportive environments and access to education, information and services, people can make informed decisions, change behaviours and live healthy, more active lives.

The following programs provided by the McGuinty government support health promotion and disease prevention and encourage healthy eating and active living. EatRight Ontario provides access to credible nutrition information from registered dietitians through both a telephone- and web-based service. EatRight Ontario's telephone service has the capacity to serve callers in more than 110 languages and can be reached toll-free by calling 1-877-510-5102. Healthyontario.com is another valuable resource which provides Ontario residents with access to a wide range of high-quality information.

The old adage "An ounce of prevention is worth more than a pound of cure" is true. I can assure all Ontarians that the Ontario government will continue to provide access to programs and services to raise awareness of chronic disease prevention for the health of all Ontarians.

As I end this statement on heart health, I implore my fellow colleagues in the House to please take the time to have their blood pressure checked and to eat healthy, and, if you are a smoker, I implore you to quit smoking and to let us help you to quit. Your good health depends on you.

Now let us celebrate our hearts with good heart health all year long.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Responses?

#### MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I'd like to respond to the minister's statement today on repetitive strain injury. I worked in industry and I understand the implications of repetitive strain. We had a number of people whom I worked with over the years, mechanics who worked in

the field, who were impacted by that. We've made a number of technological changes over the years. Also, I know a number of people who have worked in the office environment, and they've made advances with the mouse and with the keyboards to alleviate those injuries.

I think that any movement we could do to alleviate these kinds of injuries, whether it's an awareness program or opportunities to work with industry and with labour groups and to educate young people—especially the young people coming into the workforce. It's a little too late, maybe, for some of us who are a little longer in the tooth who have already had those injuries. We'll have to learn to live with them and hopefully not exacerbate them and make them any worse. But I think the young people who are coming into the workforce, whether we're doing apprenticeship programs or in the schools, programs where we can educate people or, as the minister suggested, where the inspectors will go around—and it hopefully won't be looked on as an onerous visit by the inspectors but an educational visit—they'll work with industry and with labour and with the owner-operators to make changes and improvements to the workplace.

So I look forward to working with the minister and our party on this side of the House to advance these kinds of issues with the labour community, with the office people and with business as well. I commend the minister for that statement and look forward to working with him further.

#### HEART MONTH

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I'm pleased to stand today and speak to the importance of heart health month as well, as my 6 a.m. workout today would attest.

In February, during heart health month, organizations such as the Heart and Stroke Foundation are hard at work raising awareness of the crucial importance of research and calling our attention to the warning signs that we have to look out for if we are to beat heart disease.

**Interjection:** Bob, were you there?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Yes, I work out, Minister.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I wasn't. He asked me.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Thousands of volunteers hit the streets, going door to door. While they are fundraising for money to cover research, they are also saving lives. This tradition goes back to Heart Sunday, which was a feature of Canadian life in the 1950s. February has been dedicated to heart and stroke research since 1958 in Ontario and it's now a nationwide month-long event.

The reason that heart health month is observed across Canada is the devastating effect of heart disease on Canadians. One in three deaths in Canada is attributed to heart disease and to stroke. Heart disease is a dangerous adversary that takes a Canadian life every seven minutes and it's an adversary that brings pain and grief to families and reduces the quality of life for those who battle it. Raising awareness of the importance of heart health means that the 80% of people who have at least one risk



factor—smoking, consumption of alcohol, lack of physical activity, obesity, high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, and diabetes—will become more educated about the disease and may become proactive about improving their health.

I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge and to thank the many heart health month volunteers who have spent countless hours knocking on doors—snowstorm or not, cold or not—to raise money for groundbreaking research which already has produced life-saving results in times past. We need to encourage people to take care of their health, to continue leading healthier lives and to continue battling heart disease.

Your dedication truly has saved lives in Ontario, and I join with the minister and speak on behalf of my colleagues in the caucus as well when I say thank you very much.

1330

### MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** In response to the Minister of Labour's non-announcement today in terms of repetitive strain injuries and musculoskeletal disorders, I have to say I was very much anticipating something from this government as the minister rose in his seat today, listening to him talk about the issues around musculoskeletal disorders in this province. I have to say, as he was rhyming off not only how these injuries can be painful, maybe not life-ending, but I think he said "painfully life-altering," I would agree; New Democrats would agree.

He said that the incidence of musculoskeletal injuries has actually been on the rise in terms of WSIB claims from some 40% to 43%. Apparently, we're going in the wrong direction when it comes to how these disorders and injuries are affecting workers in our province. So I was anticipating very much that the minister would come to the table today on this 10th anniversary—10th anniversary—of the awareness day for RSI or for musculoskeletal disorders, and what did we get instead? We got nothing. We got a reiteration of the significant impact that these injuries have on workers in Ontario. We got a reiteration of the government's claim to care so much about these workers, their claim to want to be doing something about it.

In fact, he says, "They result in untold pain and suffering for Ontario workers." The minister says, "We must do better than this." Minister, it's your job to do better than this, and what you need to do to do better than this is do what workers and the labour movement in Ontario have been telling you for 10 years. That is to put real, enforceable regulations in place in Ontario so that these injuries can be taken away from the workplaces once and for all. Injured workers have told you this for quite some time.

Musculoskeletal disorders are a bane in the workplaces of this province and they need to be eradicated, but they don't get eradicated, Mr. Minister, by using a "tool box." They don't get eradicated by sending workers

to a website for information. They don't get eradicated by unenforceable educational guidelines, frameworks and resource manuals. All of these things simply do not measure up. The bottom line is that it's time for this government and for this minister to recognize that, yes, musculoskeletal injuries—RSIs, repetitive strain injuries—can be eradicated from Ontario's workplaces, but only with a Minister of Labour who is prepared to put enforceable guidelines in place.

### HEART MONTH

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I will be responding to the Minister of Health Promotion's statement on heart health.

There is no question that action is needed to reverse the concerning trends of heart disease in Ontario. Heart disease is costing our economy billions of dollars each year in health care costs and lost productivity. Heart and cardiovascular disease is the number one cause of death in Ontario.

Released this week was a national plan to reverse those trends by preventing 25% of cardiovascular deaths by 2020. That would also save \$22 billion over the next decade. A nation wide strategy is important, but we also need a provincial program responding to local needs and disease trends.

Studies tell us that cardiovascular disease doesn't affect everybody the same. In northern Ontario, they are at 50% higher risk of heart disease than the rest of the province. We also know that people on social assistance have three times the rate of heart disease than people making a higher income. Our First Nations communities have double the rate of heart disease than those who are not First Nations. Heart disease does not strike randomly, so it seems that our strategy should be targeted.

What do we need first? We need a real poverty reduction strategy, one that comes with real targets and real investments. Second, we need a government that is willing to spend the money and make targeted investments to the communities that need it most. Third, we need to develop a thorough understanding of the social determinants of health and work to impact these. Social determinants of health such as poverty, housing, education, early life and social inclusion have a direct impact on the life of individuals. They are the best predictors of individual and population health, and they structure life choices.

Although I agree with most of the minister's statement, I disagree with her conclusion that "Your good health depends on you." All good health depends partly on the choices that we make every day, but those choices are under the great influence of the social determinants of health, and at the top of them is poverty. Let's remember that for every \$1,000 increase to the revenue of a poor Ontarian, you can measure a direct impact on an improved level of health of that person.

A real poverty reduction strategy would go a long way toward decreasing heart disease.



## PETITIONS

### ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I have a petition here signed by a great number of my constituents. It was presented to me by Carl Moore. He's a farmer and the former chair of Ontario Pork.

"Whereas the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Honourable Leona Dombrowsky, has publicly stated that she 'absolutely' wants to help the beginning and new entrants to agriculture; and

"Whereas beginning and expanding farmers are going to be important in the coming decade, as a record number of producers are expected to leave the industry; and

"Whereas the safety net payments—i.e., Ontario cattle, hog and horticulture payments (OCHHP)—are based on historical averages, and many beginning and expanding farmers were not in business or just starting up in the period so named and thus do not have reflective historic allowable net sales; and

"Whereas beginning and expanding producers are likely at the greatest risk of being financially disadvantaged by poor market conditions and being forced to exit agriculture because there is not a satisfactory safety net program or payment that meets their needs;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately adjust the safety net payments made via the OCHHP to include beginning and expanding farmers, and make a relief payment to the beginning and expanding farmers who have been missed or received seriously disproportionate payments, thereby preventing beginning farmers from exiting the agriculture sector."

I affix my signature. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to present the petition.

### IDENTITY THEFT

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas there is a reported epidemic of fraudulent loans involving notarized affidavits by/from loan-handling lawyers' affiants that claim debts will be carried by other people's credit worthiness and/or equity in property; and

"Whereas banks, financial institutions and lending houses claim innocence in that they rely on third parties to perform potential debtors' identity validation and financial due diligence in cases of loans and mortgages they approve on the basis of third party representations; and

"Whereas it is perfectly legal for banks to readily approve loans they consider financially risk-free using third party affidavits that make debtors of people who are completely unaware, uninvolved and never see the money; and

"Whereas, by way of example, people have signed their support to reopen a quashed OSC investigation;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That an investigation concerning identity theft be conducted into banks', financial institutions' and lending houses' lending policies, practices and procedures (as per reopening OSC file number 20050316-17043) to identify weaknesses in the law and lending system procedures for appropriate amendments to the law to strengthen specific areas of responsibility for potential debtors' identity validation and financial due diligence that will safeguard people's wealth and equity in property from fraudulent loan applications, specifically in cases of third party representations using notarized affidavits by/for loan-handling lawyers that may benefit themselves and/or their affiants."

I am signing this and sending it to the table by way of page Emily.

### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly. It's signed by a number of people from all over Mississauga, largely around the Square One area, where my colleague from Mississauga East-Cooksville has the privilege of serving.

"Whereas wait times for access to surgical procedures in the western GTA area served by the Mississauga Halton LHIN are growing despite the vigorous capital project activity at the hospitals within the Mississauga Halton LHIN boundaries; and

"Whereas 'day surgery' procedures could be performed in an off-site facility, thus greatly increasing the ability of surgeons to perform more procedures, alleviating wait times for patients, and freeing up operating theatre space in hospitals for more complex procedures that may require post-operative intensive care unit support and a longer length of stay in hospital;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care allocate funds in its 2008-09 capital budget to begin planning and construction of an ambulatory surgery centre located in western Mississauga to serve the Mississauga-Halton area and enable greater access to 'day surgery' procedures that comprise about four fifths of all surgical procedures performed."

I'm pleased to affix my signature to this petition and support it and to ask page Ashton to carry it for me.

1340

### ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** This is a petition from the Huron County Federation of Agriculture. It says:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Honourable Leona Dombrowsky, has



publicly stated that she 'absolutely' wants to help the beginning and new entrants to agriculture; and

"Whereas beginning and expanding farmers are going to be important in the coming decade, as a record number of producers are expected to leave the industry; and

"Whereas the safety net payments—i.e., Ontario cattle, hog and horticulture payments (OCHHP)—are based on historical averages, and many beginning and expanding farmers were not in business or just starting up in the period so named and thus do not have reflective historic allowable net sales; and

"Whereas beginning and expanding producers are likely at the greatest risk of being financially disadvantaged by poor market conditions and being forced to exit agriculture because there is not a satisfactory safety net program or payment that meets their needs;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately adjust the safety net payments made via the OCHHP to include beginning and expanding farmers, and make a relief payment to the beginning and expanding farmers who have been missed or received seriously disproportionate payments, thereby preventing beginning farmers from exiting the agriculture sector."

I'm pleased to sign that and give it to Jacob to take to the desk.

#### WORKPLACE HARASSMENT

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I have a number of petitions from places like Sarnia, London, St. Thomas, Oshawa and Stratford regarding Bill 29 ending workplace violence and harassment in Ontario. It's to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas workplace harassment (physical/psychological) and violence are linked to the mental and physical ill-health and safety of workers in Ontario; and

"Whereas harassment and violence need to be defined as violations of the Occupational Health and Safety Act so that it is dealt with as quickly and earnestly by employers as other health and safety issues; and

"Whereas employers will have a legal avenue and/or a legal obligation to deal with workplace harassment and violence in all its forms, including psychological harassment; and

"Whereas harassment poisons a workplace, taking many forms—verbal/physical abuse, sabotage, intimidation, bullying, sexism and racism, and should not be tolerated; and

"Whereas harassment in any form harms a target's physical and mental health, esteem and productivity, and contributes to trauma and stress on the job; and

"Whereas Bill 29 would make it the law to protect workers from workplace harassment by giving workers the right to refuse to work after harassment has occurred, require an investigation of allegations of workplace-related harassment and oblige employers to take steps to prevent further occurrences of workplace-related harassment;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to treat workplace harassment and violence as a serious health and safety issue by passing MPP Andrea Horwath's Bill 29, which would bring workplace harassment and violence under the scope of the Occupational Health and Safety Act."

I agree with this petition, sign it and send it to the clerks' table by way of page Arjun.

#### FIREARMS CONTROL

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** I have a further petition in support of MPP Mike Colle's Bill 56, which reads:

"Whereas there are a growing number of drive-by shootings and gun crimes in our communities;

"Whereas only police officers, military personnel and lawfully licensed persons are allowed to possess handguns;

"Whereas a growing number of illegal handguns are transported, smuggled and being found in cars driven in our communities;

"Whereas impounding cars and suspending driver's licences of persons possessing illegal guns on the spot by the police will make our communities safer;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 56, a bill proposed by MPP Mike Colle and entitled the Unlawful Firearms in Vehicles Act, 2008, into law so that we can reduce the number of drive-by shootings and gun crimes in our communities."

I fully concur and I will affix my signature to it.

#### HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from a number of residents in Sarnia-Lambton.

"Whereas the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care should recognize the importance of rural health care in Ontario; and

"Whereas the Erie St. Clair Local Health Integration Network commissioned a report by the Hay Group that recommends the downgrading of the emergency room at the Charlotte Eleanor Englehart (CEE) Hospital in Petrolia to an urgent-care ward; and....

"Whereas, as of today, many patients are already redirected from Sarnia to the Petrolia emergency room for medical care; and

"Whereas the Petrolia medical community has stated that the loss of this emergency room will result in the loss of many of our local doctors; and

"Whereas Petrolia's retirement and nursing home communities are dependent on easy access to the CEE hospital;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to urge the Erie St. Clair Local Health Integration Network to completely reject the report of the Hay Group and leave the emergency

room designation at Charlotte Eleanor Englehart Hospital in Petrolia.”

I agree with this petition. I will affix my signature and send it with Tariq.

### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I’m pleased to read into the record a petition from Carol Wade from 16 Cameron Crescent, Toronto, Ontario.

“Whereas wait times for access to surgical procedures in the western GTA area served by the Mississauga Halton LHIN are growing despite the vigorous capital project activity at the hospitals within the Mississauga Halton LHIN boundaries; and

“Whereas ‘day surgery’ procedures could be performed in an off-site facility, thus greatly increasing the ability of surgeons to perform more procedures, alleviating wait times for patients and freeing up operating theatre space in hospitals for more complex procedures that may require post-operative intensive care unit support and a longer length of stay in hospital;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care allocate funds in its 2008-09 capital budget to begin planning and construction of an ambulatory surgery centre located in western Mississauga to serve the Mississauga-Halton area and enable greater access to ‘day surgery’ procedures that comprise about four fifths of all surgical procedures performed.”

I agree with this petition and will affix my signature to it.

### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly, and it’s about the western Mississauga ambulatory surgery centre.

“Whereas wait times for access to surgical procedures in the western GTA area served by the Mississauga Halton LHIN are growing despite the vigorous capital project activity at the hospitals within the Mississauga Halton LHIN boundaries; and

“Whereas ‘day surgery’ procedures could be performed in an off-site facility, thus greatly increasing the ability of surgeons to perform more procedures, alleviating wait times for patients and freeing up operating theatre space in hospitals for more complex procedures that may require post-operative intensive care unit support and a longer length of stay in hospital;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care allocate funds in its 2008-09 capital budget to begin planning and construction of an ambulatory surgery centre located in western Mississauga to serve the Mississauga-Halton area and enable greater access to

‘day surgery’ procedures that comprise about four fifths of all surgical procedures performed.”

I’m happy to sign that.

### CHILD CUSTODY

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I have a petition from constituents from my riding from Apple Hill to North Lancaster, and it reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“We, the people of Ontario, deserve and have the right to request an amendment to the Children’s Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children’s relationships with their parents and grandparents.

“Whereas subsection 20(2.1) requires parents and others with custody of children to refrain from unreasonably placing obstacles to personal relations between the children and their grandparents; and

“Whereas subsection 24(2) contains a list of matters that a court must consider when determining the best interests of a child. The bill amends that subsection to include a specific reference to the importance of maintaining emotional ties between children and grandparents; and

“Whereas subsection 24(2.1) requires a court that is considering custody of or access to a child to give effect to the principle that a child should have as much contact with each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child; and

“Whereas subsection 24(2.2) requires a court that is considering custody of a child to take into consideration each applicant’s willingness to facilitate as much contact between the child and each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child;

“We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Children’s Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children’s relationships with their parents and grandparents.”

As I agree with this petition, I shall sign it and send it to the clerks’ table.

1350

### PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

#### CHILD POVERTY

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** I move the following resolution:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government of Canada should commit itself to reducing child poverty by 25% over five years.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Mr. Berardinetti moves private member’s notice of motion number 77. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.



**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** After my 12 minutes, I will also have three helpers from my party helping me out: the members from Kitchener–Conestoga, Oak Ridges–Markham and York South–Weston. I also welcome the comments that will come from the two opposition parties.

My distinguished colleague the Minister of Children and Youth Services, the Honourable Deb Matthews, introduced new landmark legislation yesterday in this very House. That legislation is Bill 152, An Act respecting a long-term strategy to reduce poverty in Ontario. As the minister stated yesterday, the approach to poverty will be a multi-pronged one. The Ontario government cannot defeat poverty on its own. Therefore, my resolution today calls upon the federal government to join us on this very important matter.

This is not a simple strategy but rather a very innovative one by our government. The bill introduced yesterday does not seek to appease any constituency. You see, Mr. Speaker, poverty has no boundary, no gender, no race. Poverty is neither Conservative, New Democratic nor Liberal—nor any party, for that matter. Poverty is exactly what it is—non-partisan.

We are faced with an option in this province to do something about child poverty today so that the next generation of Ontarians can be contributing citizens through opportunities for education, training and skills development.

Our federal and provincial economies are faced with extreme challenges of enormous proportions, and this means that society's most vulnerable would ultimately suffer unbearable hardships if we did not act now. When we speak of poverty, many notions come to mind of people enduring all forms of suffering, including hunger, susceptibility to infectious diseases, malnutrition and so on. The definition of poverty is no longer the classic textbook definition.

Poverty does have, however, one major constituency: our children. When you have no income, poverty knocks at your door in the darkest hour of the night. The horrible face of poverty is manifested by the lack of income, low consumption levels, unhealthy housing and physical living conditions, and lower quality of health care and educational opportunities. This is what a child faces when a parent has no income or a very limited income. This is the beginning of the cycle that eventually entraps society's most vulnerable in abysmal poverty. But we believe that Bill 152 will begin to pave the way forward for many to take advantage of new opportunities that will eventually reward them with the necessary skills that will make them contributing citizens to our province.

Our government is rising to the challenge of the times to act. It is the challenge of true and strong leadership, starting from the top, to address the question of poverty in our province. That is why the McGuinty government is making this a priority instead of doing nothing. Doing nothing is not an option. There is a real urgency now to act, and we have to act at this time.

My resolution calls for the federal government to act together with us, because no single government on its own can stop and solve this problem of poverty.

Let me provide some background to the issue at hand. In December 2008, the McGuinty government unveiled its bold plan entitled *Breaking the Cycle: Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy* to reduce the number of children living in poverty by 25% over the next five years. This comprehensive and multi-pronged approach realizes that poverty is more than simply income and contains strategic investments that plan to lift 90,000 children out of poverty.

The *Breaking the Cycle* poverty reduction strategy emerged out of more than 14 round-table discussions, consultations held by community organizers, and the town halls held by dozens of MPPs in various ridings. Thousands of Ontarians also responded by letter and phone conversations and through the government website.

Most importantly, *Breaking the Cycle* is a made-in-Ontario proposal that was developed in partnership with residents, businesses, community groups, front-line service providers and, most importantly, people living in poverty. This strategy is a made-in-Ontario plan, but one formed by successful approaches from around the world.

Provinces such as Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador; other jurisdictions, including New York City; and countries such as the United Kingdom and Ireland have all implemented strategies that aim to make a decisive impact on poverty. In creating the strategy, Ontario consulted, studied and learned from them all.

This poverty reduction strategy builds on the government's belief that each child should be given the opportunity to reach their full potential, and it builds on the McGuinty government's record of investment in education, social services and communities across this province.

The McGuinty government understands that reducing childhood poverty is a moral imperative. It is also an economic necessity in order for Ontario to compete in the 21st-century global economy.

The *Breaking the Cycle* poverty reduction strategy goes far beyond previous proposals by establishing a clear poverty-reduction target. The strategy outlines a number of short-term and longer term indicators that will hold government to account and show our progress in reducing child poverty. The strategy uses statistical data to show that we are making a real, tangible difference in the lives of Ontario's children. This is the smartest long-term investment we can make.

Childhood poverty does not understand jurisdictional boundaries, and we need a strong, committed federal partner. We can only do so much on our own. The federal government has a large role to play in income supports and harmonizing services for improving access for those who need it the most.

We on this side of the House believe in a willing federal partner that is essential to reducing child poverty and poverty in general. We call on them to commit



themselves as well to reducing child poverty by 25% in five years.

We want all children to be able to reach their full potential, and we understand that education is a primary means for achieving that. The McGuinty Liberals are investing in children after years of Conservative cuts.

The government understands that strong, safe communities are a key part in reducing poverty, and has made considerable investments to improve the quality of life of each child growing up in Ontario.

Not reducing child poverty is far too costly. The Ontario Association of Food Banks' Cost of Poverty study shows that the federal and provincial governments lose between \$10.4 billion and \$13.1 billion per year due to poverty. This shows that it is a joint responsibility, and the federal government must work with its provincial partners to reduce child poverty.

While we recognize that other groups experience higher rates of poverty, and often for more complex reasons, that complexity requires tailored solutions. We know that we need to continue to view the issue of poverty from these perspectives as we move forward.

We all know that Ontario is stronger when all our citizens are at their best. That is why our government is proud of this poverty reduction strategy.

As I said earlier, the Breaking the Cycle poverty reduction strategy is a multi-pronged approach, and I want to highlight a couple of key points.

It will increase the Ontario child benefit to \$1,310 per child per year. This will provide support for 1.3 million children in low-income families. When fully implemented, the enhanced Ontario child benefit will represent a total investment of about \$1.3 billion per year.

Fully implemented full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds is also part of our plan, and the initial focus is on low-income neighbourhoods. This will help children improve their readiness for grade 1, while helping more parents access additional child care and learning opportunities for their children.

Investing in community opportunity funds also gives local leaders support to coordinate community revitalization projects. We are investing \$19 million more annually in the crown wards success strategy to support kids as they leave care and transition into independence.

We are increasing funding for the youth opportunities strategy to give kids in priority neighbourhoods more access to skills training and mentorship programs. Nothing is better than having an older person, whether it be a father or a mentor, helping you to learn a new skill or some other way of working in the work environment.

We're investing \$7 million annually to develop a community hub program that will focus on using schools as hubs that respond to community needs related to poverty reduction and student achievement.

We're investing \$10 million annually in an after-school program that will support children in high-needs neighbourhoods with new programming focused on physical activity and wellness.

We're investing \$6 million annually to triple the number of parenting and family literacy centres to a total of 300 across the province.

We are funding the provincial rent bank program to provide temporary financial assistance to people facing possible eviction from their home or apartment.

#### 1400

We will also undertake a review of social assistance to remove barriers and increase opportunities. We in this government want to make it easier for those on social assistance to enter the workforce. I think I speak for many, many people, because I have seen and met many of them. They don't want to be on social assistance. They want to enter the workforce, and this government is committed to helping them do that.

We'll also establish a social policy institute that will focus on evidence-based, long-term policy development and evaluate social policy interventions.

The McGuinty Liberals have already made drastic changes to improve the lives of Ontario's children. We've transformed our education system, with over \$4.3 billion in new investments to improve the quality of education for students across the province. We've hired 2,630 elementary specialist teachers in the areas of literacy, numeracy, physical education, music and art. Five hundred and thirty thousand students in JK to grade 3 now have the benefit of almost 90% of classes having 20 or fewer students. Grade 3 to 6 students' test scores are up 11%, and the graduation rate has increased from 68% to 75%, meaning that more students now have the skills to compete in the global economy.

We have made capital investments to create and repair up to 22,000 housing units, some of these even located in my own riding of Scarborough Southwest. I was at one of the announcements late last year.

We have increased the minimum wage every year for the last three years, reaching \$10.25 an hour by 2010. We've already created 22,000 affordable child care spaces, and this strategy will build on this success. We doubled funding for the student nutrition program in our first mandate and doubled it again in 2008 so that existing programs could be enhanced and the program could be expanded to more communities. We've increased social assistance rates by 9.3% after a decade of slashed and frozen rates.

In summary, we have done a lot and we continue to move forward with this plan. I'm calling today for the assistance of the federal government so that we can help those most in need.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** It's a pleasure to speak to this poverty resolution. You know, a resolution that comes into this House and blames or asks another level of government to do something is really an admission of failure: that this government can't do the job that it was elected to do and that it promised to do.

So often, when you examine the poverty issue, there are health issues around the people who are in poverty in



our province. Our government brought in a number of acts and programs. Not the least amongst them was Healthy Babies, Healthy Children, which was one of the forerunners of those programs in North America. In that program, we examined, tested and identified problems within newborn children and children who were pre-school in age. It was one of the first programs in North America to identify autistic children. With that identification, we could either cure—hopefully—contain or treat those identified problems.

We also brought in vaccination programs and immunization programs. We brought in one of the first influenza immunizations—free flu shots for the entire province of Ontario. Anyone who wanted a flu shot could get it. That was one of the early—because you can't go to work when you're sick. It also helped to clear out a lot of the problems that we were having during the wintertime in the emergency wards across Ontario.

We brought in a newborn screening program which was about to be initiated when we left government. I believe that the current government did bring in that newborn screening program, which was based on the success of the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program. We also implemented a very interesting program, a very effective program: it was called Ontario's Promise. What it did was link the private sector with the non-profit sector. For instance, the Royal Bank of Canada could be linked with the YMCA or YWCA. I'm not sure if that actually happened, but that's the kind of thing that program put together. It put together private sectors with non-profit sectors.

Its purpose was to achieve goals for kids. It was based on a very successful US program that was brought in and implemented by Colin Powell in the United States. Interestingly, that program had a budget of about \$2 million. That covered staff and the marketing of the program. That \$2 million raised over \$60 million from the private sector for programs aimed at children, aimed at getting children to understand what they could do and the successes that they could have. Unfortunately, that very successful and very low-cost program was cancelled by the McGuinty government in 2003, and it was one of the first actions that government took. Minister Bountrogianni cancelled that program with undue haste.

I guess all too often poverty is measured by welfare numbers. Again, I would point out that under the PC government from 1995 to 2003, 750,000 Ontarians left the welfare rolls. As we were creating 1.2 million new jobs, 750,000 people left welfare and got a job. In 1995, 1.38 million Ontarians were on welfare; 1.38 million Ontarians were on welfare out of a population of about 10 million or 11 million Ontarians. Along with the 11% unemployment that we suffered at that time, if you add those numbers up, about 20% of the Ontario population was on public assistance.

The only cure we'll find for poverty is a job. That's why training and education are so important, an education that teaches everyone, an education that is flexible and that allows everyone in the schools to participate in a

learning process. Training is equally important after you leave school. Being trained or retrained is a continuing lifetime process.

All too often, the government on the other side of the House talks about welfare. Welfare is not a cure for poverty. Under the McGuinty government, people on welfare have increased 22% since you took office; 22,000 people have gone on welfare under your government. And that is a sad tale under those good times. We have had good economic times up until last year, and yet welfare rolls increased 22%.

I would commend the member for bringing in this bill. It's to his credit. However, his government is not making the effort needed. And as recently as today, or last week, we saw that they're not committed to this kind of thing as they slapped another \$300 fee, another \$300 tax on the sale of houses.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's a privilege to rise in the House and to speak on the topic of Ontario's poor. The member from Scarborough Southwest cannot be blamed, but certainly the McGuinty Liberals can be. We had a lot of sound and fury signifying nothing yesterday when the Minister of Children and Youth Services stood up and said, "We're going to reduce poverty by 25% in five years," but there's no plan to do that and quite frankly, very little money too.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** You know that's not true, Cheri.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** The Minister of Education doesn't seem to think that poverty is as serious a problem as I do, but she'll have her time to speak a little later.

Here we have a situation now where the unfolding of the plan happens, where the member from Scarborough Southwest gets up and says, "Here's why she said this yesterday: because, in fact, we're going to go and plead with the federal government to bail us out on this one and to come in riding on their white horse and to pay for the programs that we refuse to step up and pay for ourselves. That is the plan. Somebody else will pay for it someday, as long as it's not us and it's not today."

1410

As I said in the press yesterday, this is more like a 5 in 25 plan, because at the rate they're going, that's about how it will affect poverty. In fact, the reality of the province of Ontario, unlike the halcyon utopia that the member for Scarborough West just delineated, is that we have more poor children than ever before—more poor children than under Mike Harris, which is saying a great deal—more poor children than ever before: one in six. That's the reality. In fact, those who are on ODSP or OW are worse off now than they were under Mike Harris. In real dollars, in terms of what those dollars will buy, they're worse off now than they were then.

Let's look at another marker. Let's look at housing. Those who are waiting for housing are worse off now than they've ever been. Some 125,000 families and counting are waiting on affordable housing lists in On-



tario, almost 70,000 in Toronto alone. Toronto Community Housing, government housing, requires \$300 million just to patch up the walls and fix the sinks. That's the housing stock we have. And what has this government done on the housing file? They promised 20,000 units. That was way back in 2003. What have they delivered? Even by their own markers, and those markers are highly suspect, they have delivered 6,000 in five years.

We contrast that with many other jurisdictions, and the member mentioned some. We contrast that with Ireland or Great Britain, or Sweden, which did 100,000 units per year of affordable housing. In fact, when you actually look at the affordable housing component, when you consider housing should be about a third of your take-home, and you look at people who are on minimum wage, ODSP or OW, we actually have about 300 new housing units built. So this government has done, on the housing file, virtually nothing—absolutely nothing, one might say—in terms of the other jurisdictions he mentioned.

What else? Minimum wage. You know, this really doesn't take a rocket scientist. We know that if you're really serious about bringing down the numbers of the poor measurably—they're big on measurement in the McGuinty Liberal government, without anything to back it up, of course—if you were actually to measurably bring down the numbers of the working poor, then a very simple way of doing that is to raise the minimum wage above the poverty line. That *de facto* would take about a million people out of poverty, just with the sweep of the pen and not one tax dollar. Will they do that? No, they won't.

Last year we asked for \$10 an hour. A huge wellspring of popular sentiment asked for that. That's the only reason they acted on minimum wage at all. This year we're asking for \$10.25. Why? We didn't pull that number out of the air. It's because \$10.25 an hour is just above the poverty line. If you want to get working people out of poverty, you have to make sure that you pay them above the poverty line. Certainly that's an easy first step; as I say, not one tax dollar.

One of the jurisdictions that the member opposite mentioned was Quebec. Let's compare what the McGuinty so-called 25 in 5 program does as contrasted with Quebec. First of all, they're investing less than one sixth of the amount of money in their poverty program: \$300 million over five years, which is an insult. It's not only too little, it's an insult to those who live in poverty, who are worse off than ever now, under the recession. Quebec's act sets an ambitious, concrete target for poverty reduction: namely, to become one of the industrialized nations having the least number of people living in poverty. The McGuinty bill does not. Quebec's act sets up a fund dedicated to tackling poverty. The McGuinty bill does not. Quebec's act sets up a citizen advisory committee to oversee and advise on implementation of the poverty strategy. Bill 152 does not. Quebec's act requires comprehensive action on education, incomes, housing and jobs; Bill 152 does not. Quebec's act

requires action to address the causes of poverty; Bill 152 does not. Quebec's act requires all ministries to review the impacts of new legislation on low-income people; Bill 152 does not.

In fact, our neighbours in Quebec have \$7-a-day, government-subsidized daycare. We know that children and women are the poorest people in Ontario, and we know that one of the reasons they're poor is because only one in 10 Ontario children has a daycare spot. The average cost of child care across this province is about \$1,000 a month—so try to pay that on minimum wage—whereas Quebec has \$7-a-day daycare for those women who need it. If this government was serious about tackling child poverty and women's poverty, which is poverty in the province of Ontario, then they would do something about child care. Bill 152 does not.

Instead, what we have is this plea today: "Please, federal government, please, Mr. Harper, bail us out. Please send us some money so that we can make good on our promise, because if you leave it up to us, Mr. Harper, we won't." Certainly, with \$300 million over five years, they won't. As I've said, that's the price tag for patching up the walls on community housing just in Toronto. That would take all of that \$300 million, and there wouldn't be a penny left for any of the other so-called initiatives.

It's sad. In fact, I would say it's beyond sad; it's insulting. It's insulting to those who are living in poverty, and I have many of them in my riding. It's insulting to sort of dangle this promise, "We're going to reduce poverty by 25% in five years," and then turn around and say, "only if the federal government helps us and only if the economy improves."

You know, those who fail to plan, plan to fail. The McGuinty Liberals are planning to fail. That's what the 25 in 5 plan really is: It is a plan to fail.

But, hey, guess what? Don't worry about it, folks, because when the failure becomes public it will be 2014. It will be after the next election. So, coming up to the next election, they can say, "Well, we're still working on it," right? A favourite McGuinty Liberal thing to say: "We're working on it." They can say, "Well, you haven't seen the 25% reduction yet, but just wait. Give us another term and then you'll see it," and of course, then we'll have another five-year term. We've seen this federally with the famous Campaign 2000, where the federal government sat down and said, "We're going to eradicate child poverty in Canada by the year 2000." That was a black joke, and 25 in 5 is nothing if not a black joke.

Unfortunately, the joke is on those who need the help the most: those who are on the waiting lists for housing; those who are struggling on 40-hours-a-week jobs to pay their rent and feed their children and can't, who have to go to a food bank even though they're working full-time. The joke is on them. It's a black joke, it's an ugly joke, by the McGuinty Liberals. It's a really ugly joke on all of those women who are waiting for a space that's subsidized in daycare so they can even think about getting a job. It's a very, very ugly joke on all those people of colour and recent immigrants who, again, are among the



poorest in this province. And it's certainly a very ugly joke on those who suffer from disabilities and who are on ODSP or OW. This is a government that said, "If you're disabled, if you can't work, you deserve to live in poverty"—because that's what the ODSP rates guarantee, at about \$1,000 a month. Try living in Toronto with a disability on \$1,000 a month. The McGuinty government says, "Do it; we don't care." It's a very black joke on them, because there's no increase in ODSP or OW rates in this so-called war-on-poverty, 25-in-5-bill.

We get very, very tired in this House of hearing these announcements and seeing absolutely nothing to accompany them. I feel sorry for all of those who were promised something. I feel sorry for all of those anti-poverty activists, those housing activists, those daycare activists, who hear the hoopla and then get the bill, who hear the hoopla and then see that what's contained in this 25-in-5 bill is nothing; just a plea, as we hear today, to the federal government to come save us from ourselves; just a prayer, really, from the McGuinty government that the economy will improve somehow, even though they're doing nothing to help that, and maybe they'll get a job.

1420

No more talk, no more photo ops, no more pleas to the feds, no more prayers for a better economy from somewhere; what the poor in the province of Ontario need, what the cry is that they need, is action. And action requires commitment, and commitment requires money. Neither commitment nor money is on the table, either with the first 25-in-5 bill or with the member from Scarborough Southwest.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Ms. Leeanna Pendergast:** It's my pleasure this afternoon to rise in support of the resolution put forward by my colleague from Scarborough Southwest that "the government of Canada should commit itself to reducing child poverty by 25% over five years." It's an opportunity for the federal government to get involved.

I want to speak to you today as a member of provincial Parliament, as an educator of over 20 years, as a high school principal who has lived the effects of poverty on our youth, and I want to speak to you as a parent.

We believe that each child has the opportunity to reach his or her full potential. So we call on the federal government today to partner, to join in this opportunity.

I'd like to go over some of the things that are happening right now. The action is occurring, and any member who is not aware of action that is occurring in this province needs to go back and do a little bit of research.

Right now, we are working on fully implementing full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds. What that means is, our initial focus will be on low-income neighbourhoods. For any of us, as parents, as educators, who have worked in schools in low-income neighbourhoods, we know how essential and crucial this is. The federal government has the opportunity to join with us in this opportunity. We can help students to increase their readi-

ness for grade 1 and allow more parents more access to child care in this province.

Right now, this McGuinty government is investing \$19 million more annually in the crown wards success strategy. I'd just like to take a minute to give you an anecdote of what happened in my riding of Kitchener-Conestoga last week. We had a wonderful crown wards announcement. When I got to child services, the room was full of colleagues that I've worked with for 20 years—child and youth workers, support workers—and of course, the youths themselves.

What this means is that the McGuinty government is supporting youth who need to make the transition out of care, crown wards who in the past have not had the support, so as principals in schools, we have really had a difficult time in trying to support these youths in their transition.

There were dark days in the Conservative government, and I was in the schools during those dark days, but that's not what this is about. This is about looking forward, about where we are now, how far we've come in the last five years and celebrating an opportunity for the federal government to participate in this exciting investment in our schools, in our children and in our youth.

We have invested \$10 million annually, as we heard from the member from Scarborough Southwest, in after-school programs. What this does is it engages students after school. It engages them in health and physical activity. It engages parents. It engages families. What it does is it keeps the youth focused, it keeps them out of trouble, and it creates safer and healthier communities.

I'm sharing my time with the member from Oak Ridges-Markham and the member from York South-Weston, so I have to be conscious of my time. I did want to leave you with a quote, and this one comes from Kissinger, who said, "The challenges before us are monumental." Should we not accept these challenges, we will fall into chaos, anarchy and disorder. Should we decide to accept these challenges, we have the opportunity to shape a new world order. It is imperative that the federal government take the challenge, accept the opportunity to stand side by side with the McGuinty government in Ontario and accept the opportunity to reduce poverty by 25% in five years in order to shape a new world order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** I'm pleased to support this resolution brought by our colleague from Scarborough Southwest.

There's no question that the McGuinty government is serious about reducing poverty in this province—and has been so well-detailed by my colleagues on our side of the House as to what we have done and what we intend to do.

My riding of Oak Ridges-Markham, on the surface, might look like a fairly affluent area of the province, and when you look at average household income, those numbers are certainly more than the Ontario provincial



average. However, when one delves deeper—and I just met with some advocates working in the children's mental health field who informed me of the levels of child poverty in our own riding: In Markham, 16.2% of children are living in poverty; 14.3% in Richmond Hill. These are the statistics that were presented to Minister Matthews when she did her consultation in relation to the poverty strategy, which has led to Bill 152, and she took those extremely seriously—and we know full well that this government is committed to the course of action that she laid out yesterday.

I am particularly interested in the area of poverty as it relates to health. Poverty is a major determinant of health. There are so many studies that show that the poorer you are, the poorer your health is likely to be. They have shown, through epidemiological studies, over and over, that the poor suffer more low birth-weight babies in their families. There was a major study done in Britain looking at heart disease in senior administrators in the civil service versus those who were at lower levels of income in that civil service, and literally there was a gradient in terms of heart disease, with the poorer clearly suffering more cardiovascular disease, even after they corrected for such items as smoking. There is no question that a high-income earner who smokes has a far lower risk of heart disease than a manual labourer who smokes. So, clearly, there are major issues in terms of an investment in reducing poverty that will pay back in terms of better health for our population.

One of the programs that I am particularly enthused about that our government has committed to is the one that invests \$10 million annually in an after-school program that will support children in high-needs neighbourhoods with new programming focused on physical activity and wellness. This type of initiative will pay dividends. We've already, of course, doubled funding for the student nutrition program in our first mandate; doubled it again in 2008 so that existing programs will be enhanced and the program will be expanded to many more communities.

So it is quite obvious that we are committed. We ask the federal government to join us in our commitment. My federal counterpart in my riding is a member of the Harper government, and since his election, we have pledged to work together for the betterment of our communities. Whether it be infrastructure investment or this initiative, I call on those members of the Harper government to join with us in reducing child poverty and poverty in general.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I'm glad to join the debate in support of the motion brought forward by my honourable colleague from Scarborough Southwest.

Our government has introduced Ontario's poverty reduction strategy, guided by a vision of a province where every person has the opportunity to achieve his or her full potential, contribute to and participate in a prosperous and healthy Ontario. Our focus is on breaking poverty's intergenerational cycle.

1430

This vision is particularly close to my heart. The riding that I represent, York South-Weston, is home to a large number of hard-working newcomers, seniors who have contributed to our society throughout their lives, and families of various structures and dynamics, all of whom desire and deserve to live with dignity and participate in a prosperous and healthy society.

According to leading economists and social advocates, poverty costs every household in Ontario between approximately \$2,300 and \$2,900 every year—every household. Poverty costs us all. It equals lost productivity and lost tax revenue. It means higher costs for social assistance, for health care and for the justice system. But the biggest cost is the loss of human potential.

That's why our government is working toward building a solid foundation. That's why we've introduced the Ontario child benefit. We continue to lower class sizes. We have quadrupled the support of school breakfast and lunch programs. We've been increasing the minimum wage since 2003, growing to a 50% increase by next year. We're changing social assistance rules. And we are continuing to add child care spaces.

Childhood poverty does not understand jurisdictional boundaries. We need a strongly committed federal partner.

Today, I would like to share some of the concerns of some of my constituents who have written to me recently about the importance of providing child care.

Jeanette Machado, for example, writes: "You have the ability to work towards persuading the federal government to help better fund child care centres. Help make them aware of how important zero to six is, in the lives of children." She goes on to say, "As a Canadian I value the rights of families and their children. I think the Canadian government has put them aside."

Michelle Armstrong, another constituent, states in her letter: "The federal government must implement a leadership policy and funding role to resume significant direct funding towards child care in the form of fee subsidies...." She continues: "Working families need to have a safe, healthy, nurturing environment for their children."

A willing federal partner is essential to reducing poverty. It is essential to improving the lives of Ontario children. We call on the federal government to commit and join us in reducing poverty by 25% in five years.

I commend my colleague for bringing forward this motion. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'm pleased to rise and make a few comments on this motion. There are a couple of things.

To begin with, the federal Harper government has only been in power for three years, and yet this government is now in their sixth year in power. I'm curious why we didn't see a resolution like this when there was a Martin/Chrétien government. It seems odd that now that there's a federal Conservative government in Ottawa they



would want to pick on this government, and they did not do anything with all the time they had to work with the Martin/Chrétien government.

I will say, though, in fairness to the federal government, that they do in fact fund the Early Years money. All the Early Years money that flows into all of our centres across the province is federal money. I can tell you that there may in fact be a need for more money in that area. The satellite office that we had in Innisfil is now closed down. They begged the McGuinty Liberals to put more money into the Early Years centre in that particular area because of the growth of the area, and no money came forward, so they had to close it down. So I agree that maybe the federal government could be more involved, and I would look to some positive debate on this.

But you know what? This government here, the McGuinty Liberals, have had a lot of opportunities in the past six years to make a positive movement in child poverty, and they're just now getting on the bandwagon.

Thank you very much.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Mr. Berardinetti, you have up to two minutes for your response.

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** I wanted to thank all those who participated in today's debate. Two minutes is not adequate to be able to respond to all the comments made, but I wanted to thank the members who did speak today and just close with a couple of thoughts.

There is an old saying that the hottest places in hell are reserved for those who in times of crisis and moral obligation retain their neutrality. We cannot afford today, in this day and age, to stay neutral. I think the government has made it clear that we are taking a stand, we are taking a position and we're not going sit on the fence. We're going to move forward with a plan, in spite of all the criticism that might come our way. This is a good plan. It's well thought out. The bill introduced yesterday—I was present when it was introduced—is a good bill and will put us on the right path to reducing child poverty.

I also wanted to say one more thing, and that is, we as Liberals maintain certain values that we believe in. I just want to say that generally speaking, when someone defines a value, a value is something that you see as being important in your life or in your dealings in life. You put a high value on something that you think is ethically good and a low value on something that you think is ethically bad. We have made a very strong decision here in this government that this reduction strategy is something of high value. Therefore, what we're doing is, we're not telling the federal government, "You do it as well." We're asking the federal government, "Please join us as partners." I'm sure we'll also ask the municipal government here in Toronto and throughout Ontario to join in as well, because in the final analysis, unless all three levels work together and even perhaps some outside groups work together on this issue, it will never be solved. No one government, no one person, no one individual, will ever be able to solve it.

Again, the resolution is a simple one: that the federal government assist us in reducing child poverty by 25% in the next five years.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. And for those in the galleries watching and those at home watching on television, we'll vote on this ballot item in about 100 minutes' time.

## LITERACY AND BASIC SKILLS

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should provide adequate funding to community-based literacy and basic skills programs so that the agencies can properly address the growing enrolment.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Mr. Dunlop moves private member's notice of motion number 75. Pursuant to standing order 98, the honourable member has up to 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'm very pleased to be here today to participate in this debate. It's something that's very, very important to me.

I'd like to thank, first of all, all of the stakeholders who are with us today. They may not all be here yet, but I know we do have some people from the Midland Area Reading Council, the Ontario Literacy Coalition, the Toronto Adult Students Association and the ABC CANADA Literacy Foundation. They're all in the House. As well, we have joining us Mrs. Susan Nielsen, the North American regional Vice-president of the International Council for Adult Education. We have a number of people from the Ontario Literacy Coalition who are interested in this motion.

People are probably asking why I would bring a motion like this forward. The reality is, I've got some stakeholders in my riding, particularly the Midland Area Reading Council, who are here today with the executive director, Sue Bannon, with whom I've worked very closely since becoming an MPP, but have taken a more active role since I've seen some of the real issues they face.

When I talk about this today, when I talk about increased funding, I'm not talking about just the community-based funding. I want the government to take a serious look at the whole program of literacy and how we can help our post-secondary educators, as well as our colleges. But the people who are really, really feeling the pinch right now are the community-based organizations.

I can tell you that in order to have about 115 learners in their organization right now—and most of the learning is provided by volunteers in our communities—these groups operate on funding of about \$60,000 a year. That's for staff time, hydro, heat, computers—\$60,000. So basically they're poverty organizations as we would stand today. In order to raise money to pay staff, they have to do things like fundraising, having hockey games, celebrity hockey games. I know I act as a referee at some of the games. They have Books for Brunch, where people pay to have breakfast so they can buy a book. They have



spelling bees. In Orillia, they have a snowmobile ride for fun, where people pay and pledge money on a snowmobile run in the middle of the winter.

1440

I tried to ask the minister a question today—and of course that's why we call it question period. We don't call it answer period. You never get an answer from this guy on anything. I asked him about base funding. Most of these organizations have not had any increases in at least 10 years.

Why the importance today of literacy? First of all, we are losing, I suspect, close to 300,000 manufacturing jobs in this province today, and they are included in a number of ridings across the province of Ontario, some of them in mine. First of all, when someone loses their job, that's one thing. It's very, very devastating. But when they go to try to fill out a resumé or apply for another job and they can't properly do a resumé or read or write because they've been busy doing their work and raising their family and paying taxes, that's a second blow to those people. I think that we have to do more for them. I know that the minister brags about the Second Career program and all the wonderful things they are doing there. We all know that it has been a dismal failure. They're going into the community colleges and the school boards, asking them, "Can you can find anybody to help us put our numbers up?" That's actually what's happening as we speak here today. We have to get back to the very root and start funding some of the community-based organizations and actually teaching people how to read and write.

I want to talk a little bit about the statistics because I have some here; I thought it would be important. One was: There are 111 of these agencies in the province of Ontario. Many of you may have never been contacted by them because they work silently; they're run mostly by volunteers. But you know what? In the fiscal year 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008, they looked after almost 40,000 learners in our province. Those would come into categories. Level 1s and 2s would be done by the community-based agencies; level 3s, mostly by school boards; level 4s, school boards and colleges; and level 5s would be done mostly by the colleges. In a lot of cases there are discrepancies, and there definitely are overlaps in this area. The total hours of service by volunteers, if you can imagine this, just to help people read and write in this province: 265,000 hours last year—that's what it was. And it was, of course, about equal time for the people who were learning.

There was a wonderful article—and I'm going to read as much of it as I can, but I wanted to take a couple of minutes—done by the Ontario Literacy Council in response to some articles done by Carol Goar of the Toronto Star. I would like to read part of this article.

"Carol Goar's article ('Put Education Focus on ABC not Ph.D.') highlights what those working in adult literacy and upgrading programs have long known. Research supports the argument that higher literacy brings sustainable gains to individuals, businesses, econ-

omy, society and democracy. Raising literacy helps alleviate a wide range of socio-economic problems, least of which is poverty. There is not one single issue that can have such a far-ranging impact.

"According to the TD report Literacy Matters, raising literacy scores even by one level could create as many as 800,000 additional jobs." You've got the Premier bragging about trying to create 50,000 jobs with the Green Energy Act that he is pulling out of the air. Here's a study that has proven 800,000 jobs. "It could lower the national unemployment rate by more than 1 percentage point. Statistics Canada found that lifting literacy scores by 1% boosts labour productivity by 2.5% and raises output per capita by 1.5%. Raising literacy scores to an adequate level could create a payoff of \$80 to \$100 billion." That is how important this is.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to tell you something. This is a huge issue. Just since I put this small motion on the floor of this House on the 17th, through the help of Sue Bannon at the Midland Area Reading Council, who has e-mailed this across the province, we have had contact from across the country from professors, from universities, from colleges, from school boards, all saying, "Right on. You're on the right track." Second Career is not the way to go right now. It's a workable program, but we have to start at the basics, which is literacy, and I want to expand upon that.

I wanted to show you the kind of letter we're also getting. I know we don't have a lot of time here, but most of these agencies have written back to me. Here's a letter they sent to Mr. Milloy. This is one from Action Read, and it says:

"Dear Minister Milloy

"I am contacting you on behalf of the board of directors of the Action Read Community Literacy Centre in Guelph, Ontario, with regard to MPP Garfield Dunlop's motion requesting funding for community-based literacy and basic skills programs.

"The board of directors of Action Read is very grateful to the government of Ontario for the core funding that Action Read receives for operating numerous literacy and basic skills programs. The board of directors is also strongly in support of MPP Dunlop's motion. We would like to note that there has been no increase in core funding to community-based literacy programs by the government of Ontario in 10 years even though program costs continue to rise. This means that community-based literacy organizations have been challenged to seek funding elsewhere. This funding is often short-term and project based, with funds being allocated to specific objectives."

I'm only halfway through, but I just wanted to point out that I probably have 75 of these now from different agencies across the province.

Finally I'd like to talk a little bit, because we're down to a few minutes here, about the kind of money the government of Canada, these terrible people who we just heard a few minutes ago need to do more about child poverty—the kind of money they have received just



recently. I have the press releases. First of all, just so everyone knows, under the original labour market agreement, effective last year, on April 1, 2008, the government of Ontario received an additional \$311 million from the federal government, and it went directly to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. Not one cent has come back to community-based programs. Second of all, the agreement last year, the money that they used for the Second Career program—there was an additional \$1.2 billion that the government brags about. The \$1.2 billion from the federal government is over a six-year period. The amount of money the Ontario government received on April 1 last year was another \$196 million. So if you put the \$311 million and the \$196 million together, it's almost half a billion dollars in additional funding that has come to the government for training, colleges and universities.

I have to tell you that one of the key areas—it's right in the press release that the minister signed, and obviously the government of Ontario agreed to it. It says right here:

"Foundation skills training and supports: Improve access to literacy and essential skills training, ensure availability of foundation skills training tailored to specific trades and occupations, and create new opportunities for foundation skills training in the workplace."

What it boils down to, because we're down to just a minute and 43 seconds here, is that the government of Ontario has received a lot of money. One of the things that is very disturbing is that these community-based literacy organizations have even been denied a meeting with the minister. He won't even meet with them to talk about this. He's ignored them. He's disregarded the work they do. Today in the House he thanked them for the great work they do, but you'd think if he thanked them and he appreciated it, he'd at least meet with the main organizations, the key stakeholders, to talk about funding. It's been 10 years since they've had any increase in funding and it's time we did that. That's the purpose of this motion.

The reality is that if the government members are going to support this—I hope that you do support it; I wish you would—they will at least come back and ask the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities to include it in the budget. We all know how many jobs have been lost in Ontario. You heard the TD report on how we can improve upon that, how we can actually do more work with literacy and basic skills and improve the workforce, beginning at the bottom and working up.

I'm looking forward to the comments from the government members and the NDP. I hope everyone in this House will support this resolution. It's a good thing for the province of Ontario and it's a good thing for those people who slipped through the cracks early in their careers. But now, with the huge loss of manufacturing jobs, it's coming to attention a lot more through all these organizations. I know already that a lot of the agencies could double their numbers this coming year.

Thank you very much, everyone, for the opportunity to say a few words. I look forward to further debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** It's certainly my pleasure to rise in support of the member's motion that speaks to the need to fund basic literacy and skills programs in the province of Ontario.

Interestingly enough, when I first finished my degree in university, one of the things I did was to work with our local labour council in Hamilton, with several of our professors in the labour studies program at McMaster, to put together an English and literacy in the workplace program in Hamilton.

**1450**

The reason we did that at the time was not dissimilar to what's happening in these times. There was a significant downturn in the economy. Hundreds, if not thousands, of workers in the Hamilton area were seeing their traditional manufacturing jobs walk out the door.

Many of these folks had applied for their jobs right out of—in some cases not even high school; in some cases they didn't finish high school. At that time there wasn't a necessity to fill out reams of application forms. It was quite easy to get a job 30 years prior, 25 years prior, even 20 years prior to when this economic downturn was taking place in the 1980s.

What was happening was that people were getting laid off and were then in the position of having to start the job search process. You cannot do a job search process if you can't fill out an application form. You can't write a resumé; you can't read the newspaper. You can't do some of the basic things that are fundamentally necessary in job search if you don't have the literacy skills, if you don't have the English skills, to be able to undertake those activities.

I'm very proud to be here, speaking in favour of this motion, because some 20 years ago this is the very work I was doing in my community to try to help workers transition into new employment opportunities.

I have to commend the member for bringing this motion forward. I think he's absolutely right in the comments that he made specifically around the obligation of the government to observe what's happening within our economy in current times, and acknowledge and recognize that people are struggling. People are struggling significantly.

The government can, on the one hand, say in response to a report they commissioned a couple of weeks ago, the Martin-Florida report, that this is going to be the knowledge-based economy, the creative economy, and all these new ways of talking about where our economy's going. You can't get there without making sure that people have significant abilities to communicate. That's what literacy really is, when you think about it. Literacy is about providing people with opportunities to communicate. It's not just about reading and writing. Every aspect of life requires someone to be able to read and write. In fact, we see technological change in so many



ways increasing in its sophistication, yet we don't see the basic, fundamental investments in people's literacy skills and people's English skills.

The important piece of this member's motion is to acknowledge that government has a role. Government has a role to make sure that people are prepared and able to engage not only in the economy and economic activity but in the broader social and political activities that a civil society has to offer.

Providing these basic programs to help people improve their literacy, to help them improve their numeracy, to help them improve their utilization of the English language, because that is the language that is most often utilized in our communities—or French, for that matter; we have French-as-a-second-language programs as well that need funding. The bottom line is that without providing these kinds of programs, you are really doing a couple of things: You are preventing people—and these are bright people. In fact, it takes very, very bright people to be able to get by in society without having literacy skills. They have to be very adaptable. They have to be very bright in terms of trying to navigate their way through a world that communicates in written language and numerical language quite significantly. Without those skills, without those basics in hand, people have to become quite adept and quite quick, mentally, to be able to get through life without having those basic skills. It's extremely important that the government is there to make sure those skills are obtained by people.

It is not a matter of inability; it's a matter of lack of access. Nobody wants to be in a position where they are not able to read and write; nobody wants to be in that position. Numbers of circumstances occur. Sometimes it's an undiagnosed learning disability. Sometimes it's a lack of opportunity in terms of education. Sometimes it's the fact that the education that people are exposed to is not the kind of education in which they are best able to learn. There are many ways that people learn. People do not all learn in the same way.

For many, many reasons, in fact, people are in a situation where they need to upgrade their literacy and numeracy skills, and it's incumbent upon this government, if they are really serious about the knowledge economy that they talk about, to make sure all Ontarians are able to engage in that knowledge economy. The only way of making sure that will be the case is to make sure that these programs are funded so that the ever-increasing pressure that is currently on the agencies that provide these programs is reduced. In other words, people are clamouring for these programs; people are clamouring to get into these programs. The agencies have waiting lists. They can't provide a number of courses and services to people because they are simply underfunded. That's unacceptable. That's a number of folks who then have opportunity taken away from them, opportunity to engage in the economy, opportunity to engage in retraining, opportunity to grow in many kinds of different ways. It has been very obvious that this area has been underfunded for a long time, but certainly now, within the

context of economic downturn and people having to and being forced to either retrain and/or go into a new field and/or just apply for a new job, it's very, very serious times. Now more than ever we need to make sure that the basic, fundamental tools are available to people so that they can succeed, so that they can "transition" into a better job, into a new educational program, into an up-grading program, into a trade.

Unfortunately, the government hasn't seen the importance of this, and that's something that needs to turn around. You can't have these transitions occur if you don't ensure that you're providing the resources for the workers and for the people of the province to be able to take advantage of any opportunity that might be out there. Lord knows, there is not a lot of opportunity out there, I think we would all agree. In Ontario, we have about five million people who do not have the literacy skills to cope with the demands of a typical workplace. Approximately two million Ontarians in this current day are illiterate. That means they're unable to read street signs, forms, transit schedules or anything else like that. Almost 18% of the population is shut out of a variety of critical opportunities and enhanced quality of life, as I've already described. They require adequate, accessible literacy programs in their own communities. Having these programs in your own community contextualizes the learning for you and enables you to grasp a lot more easily the concepts that are being brought forward.

My colleague here from Parkdale-High Park wants to make a few comments on this issue as well. I'm sure she will agree with me that this is a motion that we can support, but we really do recognize that not only is this government failing in terms of English as a second language, literacy and numeracy upgrading and funding those resources, but we also know—we spoke about it earlier in question period—that this government is dead last, at the back of the pack, in terms of funding for post-secondary education on a per capita basis. We know that special education programs and ESL in our classrooms in Ontario are significantly underfunded. The resources aren't there to provide those children with the learning that they need in order to be able to succeed. The reality is that under this government, the education Premier's watch, approximately 42% of the population doesn't have the fundamental necessities in terms of literacy and numeracy skills. That's unacceptable. The government talks the talk, but they need to walk the walk and read the book in terms of investments in literacy, investments in education, if they actually want to accomplish what they claim to want to accomplish in terms of moving our economy forward.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I'm pleased to join this debate. I can sort of sense the consensus in the air. I would say to my colleague across the floor, my friend the member for Simcoe North, without wishing to presume the will of the House, my intuition tells me he's going to get this one through today.



I want to start off with two short anecdotes that will perhaps serve to illustrate the point that the member is trying to make and that I think we as members are trying to reinforce. A little more than 20 years ago, I joined a team. I'm a goaltender. The guy who was running the team, I remember, the second or third game in, was having some trouble filling in the lineup card. I was looking over at this and I thought to myself, "Hmm." I went over and I said, "Can I give you a hand with that?" He said, "Oh, would you, please?" I looked at it and knew right away what the problem was: He couldn't read it. I filled out the lineup card for him and just took that over. I took care of all the paperwork for the team. This was a guy who had been born and raised in Canada of parents who had been born and raised in Canada. He had high school graduation, but for all functional purposes he was illiterate.

1500

This is not uncommon in our society in the 21st century. Today, we have a lot of adult men and women—I would say there is a fairly significant male skew to it—who cannot functionally read and write. It is indeed a tragedy not merely for the lost opportunity for the individuals but for the lost opportunity for our province to use the strengths and skills the people have.

My second anecdote: One year back in the 1990s, I was attending an Eid banquet in Mississauga, and a friend of mine came and said to me, "I need a favour from you." I said, "Sure. What is it?" He said, "Well, we're trying to get together an introductory Arabic class at our community centre." I said, "Okay, how can I help?" He said, "Well, we're a few students short of a critical mass, so how would you like to learn Arabic for eight weeks?" I said, "Me?" He said, "Yeah." I said, "Well, what for?" And he said, "Well, it can't hurt." As it turned out, it was one of the more valuable experiences I had from a whole number of different respects.

Here is what's relevant to what we are discussing here, which is the resolution of the member for Simcoe North. About halfway through the eight weeks, I remember I left the class. We had all been doing our best to think and read and write in Arabic, and I was struggling because I didn't have a chance to use Arabic during the week. It occurred to me as I was driving home that when I left the class, I could read the street signs, I could go into a grocery store and read what was on the cans and on the boxes, I could turn on the radio and understand what was being said, I could look at a map and understand the directions. But for men and women who were coming from their country of birth where, in many cases, their language and their alphabet were not ours, when they would leave their English-as-a-second-language class, they couldn't read a street sign, couldn't go into a store and look at the packaging and understand what they were buying, couldn't turn on the television or the radio and comprehend what was being said. It's very important to understand the degree to which you're culturally and socially cut off if you don't have fundamental reading,

writing and numeracy skills. That is the point that I think the member is bringing out very eloquently.

There's not a lot in here that really should devolve into partisan rhetoric, but there are a few fundamental points we should make that, frankly, I think we agree on. The member, who is very active in his comments on corrections, should know, and I'll echo this, that literacy is certainly a factor in keeping people out of correctional institutions and certainly away from gangs. If you can read and write, if you can do math, you're far, far less likely to fall into a life of crime or end up being an under-achiever.

A couple of things that our government has been doing—I want to talk very briefly about two programs, both of them recently announced. One is assistance for laid-off workers. For laid-off workers, this is also an opportunity. For laid-off workers, Ontario now offers a boost to help you with the cost of tuition, books, living expenses and other costs associated with training to rebuild your skills and get on with another career. This is something we had hitherto not done.

The second one I want to bring up is, again, a very new program. With regard to the member's comments, I think it's premature to judge a program that hasn't yet had a chance to filter its way into the minds of its intended market, let alone attract its critical mass. Second Career is part of the \$2-billion skills to jobs action plan. Second Career is a very important program. It was launched in June 2008 and covers workers who were laid off as far back as January 2005—for example, workers who may have taken an interim job to make ends meet—and offers short-term training options, generally less than six months, for laid-off workers who are not eligible for employment insurance. Potential additional financial assistance for workers who qualify will cover expenses for the cost of their academic training if they need to live away from home while they're participating in training, and so on and so forth.

In the time I've had, I have been pleased to bring a couple of my personal thoughts to a resolution that I believe our government and our party will support. I know that I will, and I commend the member for having brought it to the floor. I think it's an important subject that does deserve discussion in the Legislature.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I too would like to comment on the motion by the member from Simcoe North. I think it's a very important motion that we need to debate in this House.

I have met with the members of the Organization for Literacy Sarnia-Lambton, who assist adults in our community in obtaining reading and writing skills. The organization not only provides assistance with math and basic computer skills, but also supports those individuals who are struggling to enter apprenticeship programs.

I was very disappointed to learn, when I met with this organization, that they have been struggling and operating for a number of years with only \$63,000 in core



funding. This \$63,000 covers rent, administration and wages, which as we know is just not realistic in this day and age. In fact, the executive director, who is a retired school teacher, bless her heart, has not even been drawing a wage for the last number of years in order for the program to keep functioning.

This organization in our area was staffed by Mrs. Jean Doull. She has just recently retired and been replaced by another volunteer. The organization in our area relies on the community for donations and volunteers to maintain this valuable service. The initiative cannot run long-term without increased support from the government.

It came to my attention that the federal government transferred approximately \$34 million to the province in their labour market agreement. My understanding was that these dollars were to support the over two and a half million people who do not read and write well enough to fully participate in today's economy.

The organization also informed me that this program has not seen an increase in funding since 2002, which at that time amounted to \$1,300. I wrote to the minister at the time and asked him to consider an increase to these organizations in the upcoming budget so they could do the work that's so important.

I also had another person who wrote me and asked that I mention her story today in the House—I'm not going to mention her by name. She talked about how the financial statement of costs is pathetic—\$63,000 in core funding to support accommodation and staff, as outlined in the documents. No core funding for them from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities or from the Ministry of Education; this program has to survive on community donations and volunteers.

Many families rely on these free programs to help their children. Low-income and most middle-class families cannot afford organizations like the Sylvan Learning Centres, which can cost in excess of \$300 to \$400 a month.

As I said, this young lady asked me to mention her child. His name is Jacob. He was way behind in his class in reading and writing skills. She said it would also affect his self-esteem. Jacob has attended a program at the Organization for Literacy Sarnia-Lambton every Thursday since September until June. "The progress he has made is amazing. His grades have improved and his self-esteem. Jacob may always require these additional supports to keep up with the rest of the class. How you can put a price tag on that?"

I'm going to share my time with some other members of our party, and I'd like to encourage the government, when they're setting the budget, to look at programs like these literacy programs and do what they can to help.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's a pleasure to rise in support of the member from Simcoe North on this motion. As my colleague from Hamilton Centre said, it's a good one. I certainly hope that not only does it pass today, but that it actually sees the light of day in terms of the govern-

ment's budget, which is coming up at the end of the month, because it's one thing to pass a motion, but another thing to fund it. The member has put forward a motion because there's funding attached, and this needs funding. Let's hope that the Minister of Finance hears as well and does the right thing, and that it's not just talk from across the aisle.

**1510**

Some members of this House went down on a government tour to Cuba just recently. One of the shocking realities is that Cuba, this developing Third World nation, in a sense, has a higher literacy rate than we do. A couple of the stats from the Ontario Literacy Coalition are that 50% of the total population here in Ontario has low numeracy performance, almost 40% of youth—that's 16 to 25—have low literacy performance, and over 65% of those with low literacy are of prime working age; that's 26 to 55. That's not to mention the 832,000 immigrants in Ontario with low literacy performance in English and French. So this is a huge problem in our province and it's a problem that is clearly, from the other mentions that you've received already from other members, not getting the funding that it requires.

Again, the Minister of Education is not here at the moment, but certainly labelling itself an education government—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** I would just caution the member: We don't refer to who's here and who isn't.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Certainly, a government that calls itself the education government and a Premier who calls himself the education Premier should be absolutely ashamed of these statistics and absolutely ashamed of the waiting lists that go along with them and the reality of the workers in the field and how absolutely underfunded they are.

So again, just to reiterate, I hope this doesn't die here. I hope this valuable motion is taken up by the government, not just in a vote today—which seems inevitable now—but in actual adequate funding.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Just to bring this home, I know that in my own riding, with many people who come to my office who are looking for work, one of the commonalities is that their language skills are very, very poor. Certainly their writing skills are very poor. So it is a real roadblock to employment; there's no doubt about it. In fact, I know that in some of the local organizations and social clubs there are usually one or two volunteers who read people's letters and bills. They look at their bank accounts. This is quite common, because a lot of the other adults can't read or write.

I have also been very involved in two excellent centres in my riding which under the former government were slated for closure, but we were lucky to save them. One is the Yorkdale Adult Learning Centre. I was just there last week. It has about 1,000 students from all over the world, adults—you know, 19-year-olds who come back to



school. It's an amazing place, the Yorkdale Adult Learning Centre. Part of the literacy and basic skills programs are offered there, at Yorkdale. There's also Bathurst Heights: 1,200 students there every day. I was just talking to them today about a situation. But they also teach basic numeracy, literacy, basic English. They are now full-blown open; the threat of closure is gone. We're looking at expanding, in fact, in a couple of those centres. So there are some very good teachers and some very good volunteers teaching literacy and numeracy.

I should mention that our government has been spending—I think we're up to almost \$75 million a year on basic literacy and numeracy, and that's an increase from \$60 million. Then there was one-time funding of \$2.8 million just recently. So it is always an incredibly high-demand area, and I'm glad the members brought this up. Sometimes we have to bring attention to these gaps that sometimes are there in the coordination, because there are so many programs going on.

I know the member was slamming the Second Career program, but part of the Second Career program offers basic numeracy and literacy. It's starting up. Hopefully, that program can reach out and expand and help a lot of people as they transition. I know that even the Speaker has mentioned some of the shortfalls in the Second Career program, but that's where we've invested, I think, up to \$2 billion in giving people better skills, and writing and basic numeracy are part of that. I think there are obviously ways to make that more compatible with the work the community groups are doing, because sometimes, as the member said very forcefully, the community groups are underestimated and undervalued. We need to do that, because they do the work with very little pay, very little support and very little recognition. So I think this is a good message for our minister, a good message for all of us here, that we have to do better, that we have to do more, and as a government, we're always open to that.

The good news, though, is that after many years—a lot of these dollars that Ontario taxpayers were paying to Ottawa were never getting back into Ontario—luckily, we did sign the labour market agreement, which means that some of those tax dollars you pay here in Ontario and that our companies pay and that you pay in your income tax and GST stay here in Ontario to help these programs. Before, all that money was flowing to that big welfare-equalization program that the federal government had—\$23 billion a year leaving Ontario and going all over the country. We keep some of that to help our Ontario people that need these programs.

So by signing that labour market agreement and by signing, also, the federal-provincial immigration agreement where there's going to be \$1 billion invested in newcomers in Ontario over the next five years, we're able to keep some—and it's not the federal government's money; it's the people of Ontario's money. They're paying the income tax. We pay more income tax and more GST than anybody else in Canada. We can't afford to keep sending a cheque to Ottawa to send to Quebec, to

send to Nova Scotia and to send to Newfoundland all the time. We have to help our people here. Luckily, with these agreements, we're now beginning to do that.

I know the Harper government has to be commended because they're beginning to change, because even our former Liberal friends wouldn't understand that. At the beginning, Harper and Flaherty wouldn't understand it. But now, all of a sudden, thankfully, there's a bit of a shift. We're able to keep some of our money here in Ontario.

God help us that we can keep money to help our own people and maybe help some with literacy and numeracy by keeping money in Orillia, keeping money in Barrie and keeping money in Hamilton. We need the money. God bless Quebec, but we also need to keep the money here in our own communities. That's what this is about, because we have needs for numeracy and literacy programs. Maybe if we keep more of our money here, we'll get more money for these programs, and I hope you all support that. Keep the money here. Help our own first.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I want to recall for members of this House and for anyone watching us that it was sometime in the last year, if memory serves, that we all heard the story published in a book of a well-known NHL hockey coach who, after a very successful career, went public via this book with the fact that he could neither read nor write, but had obviously had a successful career in his chosen profession without that skill set.

The reason I start out today in what I have to say with that story is because it underscores the fact that he is one of the lucky ones. For every one of him—and he gets publicity because of his fame and the fact that people know him—there are thousands of people whose names we don't know. I think every member of this House has been exposed to that in dealing with Literacy Month and going to literacy councils in their own ridings.

I rise to speak about my colleague's resolution to ensure adequate financial resources for literacy programs. In Ontario, without a second's hesitation, anyone can see that we simply don't do enough. We just don't do enough. It's important for the government of the day—and it happens to be the McGuinty government at this time—to look into its budget planning and look into its collective heart and realize what we're talking about.

At any time, illiteracy, which takes many forms, not just the reading and writing part of it, is a very negative thing to have within our midst. Now, when we see people losing jobs in the tens of thousands and all kinds of applications to post-secondary institutions, you have to wonder about people who have a literacy problem that precludes them going anywhere near a post-secondary institution but requires them to have a basic skill set to just go and work.

Statistics themselves speak to the need for these resources, and the government has to follow through on the commitments that it has made to ensure retraining services to people who have lost their jobs in the current economic crisis and are in need of a new career.



Last year, the government of Canada invested \$1.2 billion in Ontario's labour market just to help individuals to improve their skills. Agencies are still waiting for Ontario's government to channel that money and fund their literacy training programs. We know that literacy is the most basic requirement for any type of success. Over the past 10 years, low levels of literacy have remained at 42% in Ontario.

1520

I want to underscore something else. Literacy does not mean that you're stupid or lazy or incapable. It usually means you just plain need a leg up. So that's what these programs are about, and it is extremely important.

If we're going to be serious about making sure that each and every individual in this province has the opportunity to reach their full potential, then we, as legislators, have the responsibility to provide them with an environment that is conducive to doing so. Lack of government support should never stand in the way of individual determination, ambition, willingness to work hard and to change one's life, which so many people are being forced to do right now.

Ontario's economy is changing. It is becoming increasingly knowledge-based, and the most basic knowledge you can have is reading, writing and arithmetic, which are the basics to literacy. But 30% of the population above 15 years of age has less than a high school education, with almost 40% of youth at low literacy performance. I have seen this personally. One would think that in a riding like my own, up in Thornhill, with an average household income in excess of \$100,000—how much illiteracy could there be? I can tell you: a heck of a lot.

I myself have had the privilege of standing before 100 people and talking to them about my background and why I developed literacy skills and looking at their backgrounds and finding out that there's an array of reasons why they didn't, and watching them so hungry to suck up the knowledge they were getting from that literacy centre, that was teaching them to be as good as they could be by having these basic skills.

So I talk about statistics, but behind the numbers are the faces of real people who do not have the skills required to succeed in their lives and to provide for their families. I again urge this government to do what it has to do to make sure that Ontarians, in today's economy especially, have these very basic and essential skills.

I thank my colleague for raising this issue and hope that everybody in this House will vote for this motion.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** I would like to bring the attention of the House to the tireless workers and volunteers who tutor these students and what a wonderful job they do. As the member who brought this bill forward mentioned, there are 265,000 hours of volunteer work every year. That's an amazing number.

I'd also like to commend the courage of the students. It's not an easy thing to walk into a library or walk into

an organization and say, "I can't read and write." That takes a great deal of courage. I would commend those people who do that, particularly later in life.

I'd also like to commend the generosity of the donors. There are private donors to these programs throughout the province—and there's never enough money. It's always a hindrance to getting more activity in the program. But those who do give, and give generously—I'd like to commend them too, because this is the front line of training and development, which gives a hand up instead of a handout.

Without literacy, when looking for a job, you're almost relegated to minimum wage and/or welfare. I often think that it's a misnomer to call it a minimum wage. I think it should be called an entry-level wage. If you're working at entry-level wages and you are not taking further training, then something is wrong in your life. You need that literacy. You need the skills with arithmetic and mathematics. You need the skills in order to move up on the pay scale. Every time you improve those skills, your pay scale will move up along with them. So it's very important. I think that some day we might rename the minimum wage as an entry-level wage.

I would also like to bring to your attention a few organizations in my riding. DoorWays in Burlington—it's an excellent name; it opens a door—teaches people how to read and write. There's also the Adult Learning Centre in Burlington/Oakville, which is run by the Halton Catholic District School Board. There's the Literacy Council of Burlington, and also Literacy North Halton, which involves Milton, Georgetown and Acton.

There are also YMCA organizations that teach these things. I would encourage anyone listening who is thinking about this area to go to their YMCA or look for a literacy council office in their area.

There are a number of success stories, and I think I might have time for one. This is a letter from a mother and it says: "I had to learn to read and write English so that I could help my oldest son with his homework. He was having a difficult time at school and they wanted to put him in a special school. I was very upset. My husband was too busy working to help him. I knew that I was going to have to learn more so that I could help him. I will do anything to help my children. He is now eight years old and he is getting As and Bs instead of Ds. He is a changed boy. He is happy and confident and loves challenges. My youngest son and daughter are doing well at school too. Now I can read the notes my teachers send home with them.

"I also have a part-time job working at a store as a cleaner. I have been there for one year. When I started working I could not do other jobs such as cash or taking customers' orders because I could not read. Now I can do these jobs and I like going to work."

How a student who is now getting As and Bs—I have to question the assessment process that was going to send him to a special school.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Mr. Dunlop, you have up to two minutes for your response.



**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'd like to thank everyone who took part in the debate today.

One of the reasons we have a lot of the stakeholders here today is that they were actually at a book launch. The book is called *Learning from Our History*, and it's all about the history of literacy. They just did this before they came over to the House today.

There are a couple of comments I would like to make. One I see in a letter is that we learn to read, and then from that point on we read to learn. In this place, we just take that for granted, but you get passionate about people when you find out some of the issues that they face, particularly, as I mentioned earlier, people who have lost their jobs.

I was curious. The member from Eglinton—Lawrence mentioned, "Let's keep that money here in Ontario." Of course, there is only one taxpayer anywhere. What I want to see is, let's get some of this money that we're keeping here in Ontario, particularly that new half-billion dollars a year that was effective last year—I want to see some of that going into community-based literacy programs. If you take a look at these budgets of \$60,000, \$65,000 and \$70,000 for the whole organization—do the math on that. It's less than \$10 million for the whole province. If you think of it in terms of the whole Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, it's a pittance. How much money was wasted on the York University strike that could have gone towards this? That's what I am getting at here.

If the government members are going to support this, fine, but let's see results in the budget, because I am going to tell you something: I, for one—and I'm passionate about this because I've got some strong stakeholders in my riding that push me. I'm not going to let this drop. Even if you don't put one cent in the budget, it's not going to drop. We're going to keep nagging you and nagging you and nagging you until this funding for community-based organizations is increased.

Thank you very much, everyone.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. We'll vote on this ballot item in about 50 minutes.

## VISUAL FIRE ALARM SYSTEM ACT, 2009

### LOI DE 2009 SUR LES SYSTÈMES D'ALARME-INCENDIE À AFFICHAGE VISUEL

Mr. Arthurs moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 148, An Act respecting visual fire alarm systems in public buildings / Projet de loi 148, Loi sur les systèmes d'alarme-incendie à affichage visuel dans les édifices publics.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Pursuant to standing order 98, Mr. Arthurs, you have up to 12 minutes for your presentation.

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** It gives me great pleasure to be able to rise today on second reading of Bill 148, An Act

respecting visual fire alarms in public buildings. It's an act in simplicity in that it's intended that all new provincial and municipal public buildings shall be equipped with a visual fire alarm system.

I had the opportunity during the last Parliament to introduce a similar bill. This bill has been scoped and focused a little more than that one to pay very close attention to those buildings over which we as a government of the province of Ontario have control, our provincial buildings and our broader public sector partners, our municipal partners, in that regard. It was scoped and focused so that, as an initial stage, there would be new buildings that, under our control and municipal control, could implement with ease visual fire alarms.

1530

I'm pleased as well that we have with us—and I'm going to introduce some of them momentarily—some guests today in support of the bill that has been brought forward.

I'd ask, though, as we enter into the debate today, that we think about what this place is like at 10:30 in the morning, for that hour. Think about the noise that goes on, the questions and the answers and the interjections that occur across the floor that make this place as exciting as it is at that point in time, that make question period the point in the day where the public pays attention to what's going on in our Parliament, the time when they turn on their TVs, the time that the media report on. Then take a moment in silence to think about what it's like for those without hearing when that's happening. That's the world so many in our province live in. The implications for that are very broad-ranging, not the least of which is the issue of safety and independence, and the personal respect that comes with that. What more fundamental function should we have than ensuring the safety of our citizens?

This has been the second opportunity I've had to introduce a bill of this nature. During both of those times, I've been very pleased to have the support of those in our community who are deaf or hard of hearing. I want to introduce just a few of those who have taken the time to express their support and to join us this afternoon—the list won't be complete; it never can be—a few of those who have joined us today.

From the Canadian Hearing Society, many of you will recognize the name of Gary Malkowski, a former member of this Legislature. I believe that Gary's riding at that time was York East. Kelly Duffin, Veronica Bickle, Paul Smith and Gordon Ryall: all engaged with the Canadian Hearing Society. Also with us is Linda Kenny, from the Ontario Association of Children's Rehabilitation Services. This is a matter that spans all ages. I see my friends across the way expressing a gesture of welcome. I would like us all to have that opportunity to express our welcome to our friends.

*Applause.*

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** We have our ASL interpreters here as well, as a most critical resource, ensuring that those with hearing disabilities are able to participate in



the fullest way possible in this particular process that we have before us.

There will be lots of individual stories about issues around hearing loss and public safety. There will be those who will tell us about situations in which they have awoken in the morning at a hotel—those people without hearing—to find out that the night before there had been a fire alarm but they had no way of knowing of that alarm.

This bill doesn't speak to hotels. It doesn't speak to private sector facilities of that nature. It would certainly be my hope, should this bill pass second reading, and should it see its way through this Legislature for third reading and enactment, that this would be a step toward a far more inclusive set of situations for those with hearing loss in our community.

Probably each of us in this place has neighbours, friends, co-workers, even in this Legislature, and family members who have hearing loss of a greater or lesser degree. It's not unusual for us in this place to bring forward issues of broad concern that affect us even more directly. My family is one of those. One of my children has a rather severe hearing loss. He works on the basis of his hearing aids. I'll tell you, without those, his functionality is much diminished. There are times when I think he turns his hearing aid off so he need not listen to his mother and father. Being the age that he's at, I think he occasionally may turn it off so he doesn't necessarily have to listen to his wife.

In all honesty, though, there have been times when—I'll give you an example of a situation. I mentioned hotels. At a summer place that we were fortunate to have, one evening about seven or eight years ago there was a very significant storm. It was one of those major storms where trees were crashing down. There was actually loss of life somewhere near us. The windows were being taken out of our place by trees falling. My wife and I were in quite a state. I hustled her into a solid part of the building. She said, "We should wake up our son." I said, "No, he's not hearing this." He had his hearing aid out; he was sleeping at night. There was no reason for him at that point to be engaged in what we were engaged in.

Having said that, it draws home for me the fact that as an individual, he had no opportunity to engage in a process to protect his own safety in our absence. In that instance, a visual fire alarm wouldn't have helped him because it wasn't a fire that was the situation. But the issue of safety and the issue of individuals being able to have the opportunity to protect themselves is what I think is so critically important.

During the last Parliament, the government passed legislation for accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities. It's a long-term process to ensure the broadest range possible of engagement of Ontarians in the full spectrum of our life through providing opportunities for accessibility for those with disabilities. This is an opportunity for government, for the committees and for the structures they put in place to implement one small part of that agenda, an opportunity through this Legislature for us to reinforce that we have an ongoing obligation to

ensure that legislation of that nature results in accessibility for all on all fronts.

There are times that I personally refer to deaf and hard of hearing disabilities as sort of a hidden disability. When we have our debates in here, it's much easier for us to identify with physical mobility disabilities. Those are easier to identify. I would even suggest that it's much easier for us to identify visual disabilities. It's easier for us to identify those, but it's so much more difficult for us to readily identify hearing loss, those who are deaf or hard of hearing, and their disability. So I think it's incumbent upon us generally, and where the opportunity arises, as I have this opportunity, to heighten the awareness in particular of those with disabilities in our population who might not be as readily and easily identifiable to us on a day-to-day basis. I'm fortunate that I have this privilege in this place to be able to do that in a very public way, to do that with my colleagues who are here on all sides of the House, and, as important, to be able to do it to the public at large with the media that we have available to us.

With the support of the Canadian Hearing Society and others who are here with us today, we've managed—they and us—to already put out a press release about what was intended in regard to this bill at second reading. I'm pleased that today on the Toronto Star's website it has been picked up as an item and they're seeking response to it, and I'm hoping it's in print tomorrow. The minister with whom I work—I have responsibility to the Minister of Finance. I understand through his office this morning that he said he picked it up on 680News on the radio, and just a short while ago, we had a call from a Sudbury radio station. They would like to do a short interview after. So I'm pleased that there's sufficient interest, in print and radio and other media, not just locally but broadly, for a private member's bill, for a backbench member from the Toronto area to have a call from Sudbury, saying, "Would you like to talk about why you feel it's important that you bring legislation forward to support those who are deaf or hard of hearing, to ensure their safety in public buildings, in provincial and municipal buildings?" So I'm pleased with the support of our friends here, that it gets that scope of activity even as we are in the midst of debate of the bill before us.

I know that the last time that I introduced a bill of this nature there was pretty broad support. I'm anxious to hear the debate as it continues today. The last time I introduced a bill, there were concerns about the implementation, particularly in those retrofit situations in buildings, and that's some of the scoping to ensure it deals with new buildings over which we have control and our municipal friends have direct control, as a clear signal and message of what the opportunities are broadly—publicly and privately—to ensure that those who are disabled through hearing loss have the opportunity to ensure their own public safety and to ensure they can act with dignity and respect with regard to that public safety.

**1540**

It's certainly my hope, should this bill have the support of this Legislature at second reading, that it may



yet see the light of day again here and, with implementation, might be the catalyst for many more things. At the very least, this is an opportunity today to speak to what the needs are, to draw the government's attention to this need and to draw the attention of those working on behalf of the government, through the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, to this segment of our population that needs our specific attention, maybe more so because of the nature of the disability, which is not as visible to us all.

Speaker, thank you so much for these 12 minutes. I look forward to the balance of the debate this afternoon.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you.

The Chair would like to recognize in the visitors' gallery Mr. Gary Malkowski, who served in this House as the member for York East in the 35th Parliament. Welcome, Gary.

Further debate?

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I'm very pleased today to speak in favour of Bill 148 and to commend the member for Pickering-Scarborough East on bringing this matter forward once again, and to also offer thanks to the people who are here today from the Canadian Hearing Society and other organizations for their continued efforts to keep this in the forefront of our minds and to encourage our efforts in this respect. Thank you for all the hard work that you've done, as well.

As you know, we in the PC Party did support this bill when it was brought forward by the member for Pickering-Scarborough East in 2006, and we're pleased to offer our support to it once again. We hope that this legislation is carried forward, not stalled in committee, and that the appropriate changes are made so that the deaf, deafened and hard of hearing are able to have the same right to safety from fire and other emergencies as those not living with a hearing impairment.

This bill, of course, if passed, would require that all new provincial and municipal public buildings be equipped with a visual fire alarm system so that deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people are alerted to smoke, fire and other emergencies.

A member of the Durham deaf accessibility clinic, with whom I've met on several occasions, as well as Ms. Maggie Doherty-Gilbert from the Canadian Hearing Society, have advised me that in my riding alone there are some 7,000 people living with some sort of hearing impairment. Statistics Canada reports that by the year 2031, a quarter of our population will be aged 65 or older, which is nearly double the current 13%. Of course, all of us, as baby boomers, as we continue to age, can expect that we will also experience some degree of hearing loss. So this becomes a very significant issue that I'm glad has been brought forward.

Those people who wear hearing aids take them off at night, and therefore they wouldn't be able to hear regular smoke detectors—for the people who are listening to this debate or watching this on television—and what this would require is visual smoke detectors/fire alarms so that people will be alerted by strobe lights and other mechanisms to visually alert them to some danger.

As we know, the existing legislation requires landlords to provide smoke detectors within dwellings; however, there is nothing in the codes to require landlords to provide visual fire alarms for their deaf, deafened and hard of hearing residents. So it renders the rule to have a regular fire alarm or smoke detector in your home a little bit meaningless if it sends only an audio alarm. Just to have it for the sake of having it doesn't mean that it's going to provide any degree of safety for people. For this to be required in new public buildings would certainly set a standard for everyone, and for all new public buildings I think it certainly should be mandatory.

As the member for Pickering-Scarborough East mentioned, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act commits the government of Ontario to create, implement and enforce standards of accessibility with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises for the 16% of Ontarians with disabilities, including those who are culturally deaf, oral deaf, deafened and hard of hearing.

The Ontario Human Rights Code explicitly states that everyone has the right to be free from discrimination. The policy and guidelines outline the details and give practical measures for an array of locations and services, including housing, to provide Ontarians with disabilities equal treatment and barrier-free access.

The Canadian Human Rights Act also extends the laws of Canada to uphold the principle that "all individuals should have an opportunity equal with other individuals to make for themselves the lives that they are able and wish to have and to have their needs accommodated ... without being hindered in or prevented from doing so by discriminatory practices based on ... disability...."

There are many reasons we should be supporting this bill, and I'm certainly happy to do that. But I would submit that we actually need to do more.

With respect to the issue of visual smoke detectors and fire alarms in residential housing, there has been an issue that has arisen lately with respect to who should pay the cost of hard-wiring these facilities in private locations. Of course, it's easy to go out and buy one that you can simply plug in—it costs next to nothing—but it's not going to provide any degree of safety for people who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing. There has been a request made that this be considered an assistive device under the assistive devices program, because the cost of having one of these visual fire alarms installed in a home is very expensive when you consider that hard-wired visual smoke detectors are usually \$160 each, compared to regular smoke detectors sold at an average of \$15, and that the Canadian Hearing Society estimates that the average cost of installing three visual fire alarms in a home, which you would need, is over \$405. That would rise to more than \$900 once an electrician has been hired, when you consider the labour costs involved in hard-wiring these detectors in a typical three-floor home.

This is something, I would submit, that the government should consider because, of course, most people



with hearing loss have low incomes because of the disability issues related to vocational supports, which is another area that I submit we should be addressing. It is something that I think is a safety issue, and I would highly recommend that the government consider that as a further measure to protect people who are deaf, deafened and hard of hearing.

Another thing that I think we should consider is the actual real implementation of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. I completely agree with the member from Pickering-Scarborough East when he says that when we think of disabilities, we often think only of physical disabilities, and there are many other types of disabilities that are not always immediately discernible but are every bit as real. We should be looking at accommodating those disabilities to the degree possible in this Legislature and in this building.

Certainly, there are many physical impediments in this building that are difficult to negotiate, but there are also communication difficulties that are encountered by people who are deaf, deafened and hard of hearing. We have, on occasion, had a sign language interpreter here for members—should there be members—pages and, of course, people who are here in the galleries as our guests. We should have this on a regular basis, as we have here today. I would submit that that's something we should be considering, as we go forward, to make this place more accessible for everyone.

We should also be considering ways we can implement the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act faster. To submit that full implementation will not happen until 2025—I think it's good to have a goal, but I submit that we should be working harder and redouble our efforts to make sure that not only this place, but all public buildings in Ontario and all homes, are made as safe as possible and that our buildings be made as accessible as possible to everyone.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** It's my pleasure to rise in the Legislature and speak to Bill 148, and to thank the member for having brought this issue forward to the House once again. As he mentioned in his remarks, this of course is not the first time he has brought forward a bill of this nature. I want to congratulate him and commend him for his persistence in bringing forward this issue.

We know that the previous bill ended up in committee, but unfortunately it didn't get much further than that. Hopefully, this bill will have a little bit more success in terms of its movement through the House into potential law, and I would certainly support that. It's an excellent piece of legislation. As we know, a number of private members' bills that are brought forward are good pieces of legislation but unfortunately don't end up getting to the place where they become law in this province because they're left to sit on the back burner as the government focuses on its agenda and doesn't actually allow

enough of these bills to go forward. Let's hope that this one bucks the trend and actually gets over the finish line, so that we can have a better system in Ontario that ensures people are able to be warned, in whatever way they can be warned, and can best receive information when there is a fire that is in a location they are in.

**1550**

At this point, there are some 20 private members' bills that have been ordered to committee for review—just in this very session—and are sitting there, waiting in committee. Hopefully this bill, as I said, will be one of the ones that gets moved forward. It seems to me already from the comments being made that members around this chamber are in favour of it. I know members around the chamber were in favour of the last bill. I think that says something about the will of the MPPs, anyway, in this Legislature to see something go forward in this regard. So let's hope that the government is listening and does see fit to move this bill forward.

It's interesting for me to note, though, that there is one small change in this bill that is different from the previous effort, which was Bill 59. Bill 59 required that all provincial and municipal public buildings have a visual fire alarm. Bill 148, on the other hand, requires only new public buildings to have a visual fire alarm. If that's a misreading, I would ask the member in his sum-up to correct me, but that's my understanding of the difference between this bill and his previous bill. I'm going to talk a little bit about that point a little later on.

It goes without saying that New Democrats absolutely support Bill 148. The need for visual fire alarms in this province is an absolute no-brainer. It's something that we've discussed before, as I mentioned, at the behest of this member who brought the previous bill forward. Many of us take life-saving smoke alarms and emergency notification systems for granted in this province. The situation is not the same—it's completely different—for deaf Ontarians.

In fact, here's what the Canadian Hearing Society says on this issue: "As life-saving as these emergency notification measures and devices are, it is important to remember that, for culturally deaf, oral deaf and deafened, as well as many hard of hearing Canadians, they fail completely." While 1% of Ontarians are culturally deaf, 10% are hard of hearing and 25% experience hearing loss. That means a significant number of Ontarians may not hear the kind of fire alarms that other Ontarians use to get to safety when there is a fire.

This is one of the challenges we face, and it's exacerbated by the demographics in this province. As we know, our population is aging. The baby boomers are getting older, and there are some interesting stats that are provided by the Canadian Hearing Society in regard to hearing and loss of hearing as we age. The average Canadian right now is 39 years old. By 2030, the average age will rise to 45. In 2030, 25% of Canadians will be over 65 years old, almost double the current number, which is 13%. Hearing loss is the third most prevalent chronic condition in older adults and the most wide-



spread. Reports indicate that more than 80% of people over 85 have a hearing loss while 46% of people between the ages of 45 and 87 have hearing loss.

This bill builds on the requirements in the Building Code Act that require the installation of visual signal devices in the following areas: theatres, arenas, hospitals and long-term-care facilities, and 10% of hotel rooms. The Building Code Act changes were won by tireless work of advocates like the ones we have here today, advocates for the deaf. For example, in January 2008 the Ontario Human Rights Commission reached a settlement between Barbara Dodd, who is deaf, and one Toronto hotel after a fire alarm went off without Ms. Dodd's knowledge. Luckily, it was a false alarm. The settlement saw the hotel industry accept greater use of visual strobe light fire alarms.

It's unfortunate, though, that the bill contains no implementation details. For example—and this is an important one, particularly in the context of the current economy and the strapped municipalities that are paying for provincial government programs, let alone their own budget pressures—how are these cash-strapped municipalities going to pay for the expensive electrical upgrades required to install visual fire alarms? If the government decides to pass Bill 148, which we certainly hope it does, and which we believe it should, they must put in place some sort of funding support so that municipalities can be assisted in making the necessary changes.

A similar point was made by the Canadian Hearing Society when it comes to deaf Ontarians themselves having to install these systems in their own homes. Compared to a regular smoke detector, these systems are extremely expensive. The CHS has rightly argued that the province should be extending financial support to help deaf Ontarians install these systems that will keep them safe in their homes. It's extremely expensive to install the system, and unfortunately it's not covered by initiatives like the assistive devices program which help Ontarians purchasing hearing aids, for example. So you can get your hearing aids through the assistive devices program, but your visual fire alarm is not something that you can obtain financial assistance for. It seems really unbelievable that that's the case. We need to look not only at the legislation, which is extremely important, but we need to look at how we make the legislation function in a way that actually keeps people safe. The way to do that is to ensure that whether we're talking about municipalities or whether we are talking about individuals, the government recognizes and acknowledges that the expense of applying the legislation, of making the legislation effective, would be in providing financial support for folks and for municipalities to help to implement the systems.

Why does Bill 148 apply only to new buildings? This is a question that I have about this bill. Shouldn't all public buildings have visual fire alarms? It shouldn't be just newly constructed buildings. It should be what the member had provided in his previous bill, which was that all public buildings be retrofitted to include visual fire

alarms. In fact, one would wonder if it isn't more likely that an older building may have wiring problems or other kinds of situations that would make it more important to have visual fire alarms in those older buildings. It's an issue that I think is problematic. It reminds me of the issue of sprinklers in retirement homes. We all know that in 1995, eight Mississauga retirement home residents were killed in a fire. The facility didn't have a sprinkler system. An inquest was held and pages and pages of recommendations were brought forward. One of those recommendations was for mandatory sprinklers in all residential care facilities. The government ignored the recommendation, unfortunately, and introduced a requirement that only new residential care facilities need to have sprinkler systems—very similar.

The old bill was one that required it of all government buildings and public buildings; this one now, only new government buildings and public buildings. In the case of the sprinkler system, this January just past, almost 15 years later, two seniors died in a fire in Orillia—and all of us will remember that tragic day—in a retirement home that did not have sprinkler systems. Why didn't it have sprinkler systems? It wasn't required to have sprinkler systems because it was an older home, built before 1996. Why two different governments ignored pages and pages of life-saving recommendations that stemmed from that tragedy in 1995, a decade and a half ago, is hard to understand.

The sprinkler system requirement should have been in place for all older and newer homes. It was irresponsible not to follow up on those recommendations. In the case of this bill, I would hope, if we get it to committee, if we get to a point where we're actually, hopefully, moving it forward, the member would take the idea of an amendment that would include retrofitting the older buildings and not just new buildings.

That's the concern I have with the bill. I'm worried that we're making some of the same mistakes as have been made by government in the past 15 years or so since that tragedy that occurred with the sprinkler system issue in Mississauga in 1995. Again, it's about safety. It's about maintaining and ensuring that people are able to safely leave a building because they've had the appropriate warning that a fire is taking place in that building.

While visual fire alarms are critical for deaf and hard of hearing Ontarians, I also wanted to raise one final issue, and that is the issue of the poverty and unemployment that is disproportionately affecting deaf Ontarians. In fact, this is a situation that gets more dire every year.

**1600**

In the last two years, the number of deaf and hard of hearing Ontarians who are living in poverty has risen by 14%. This screams out for the need of a significant investment in an anti-poverty strategy—not a policy, like what this government is bringing forward, that commits other governments to fund programs, but a strategy that is backed by dollars here in Ontario to assist low-income Ontarians. We recommended a \$1.2-billion anti-poverty



plan. The government is proposing a \$300-million target over five years, and it's not going to meet the 25 in 5 demand that everyone knows anti-poverty activists are demanding from our government.

This ODSP figure that I mentioned earlier also illustrates how critical it is for the government to boost funding in employment services programs. The Canadian Hearing Society has requested \$2.5 million in addition to employment services funding to help deaf and hard of hearing Ontarians get a job. Without a doubt, that's a proposal worth funding as well. Fund assistance in terms of implementing the devices in their homes, help municipalities, and let's get some hard of hearing and deaf people back to work.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I guess the first question that would come to my mind is, why would we not want to pass this bill? This is one that makes perfect sense, and, on a day like today, where three very thoughtful, very workable resolutions and bills have been brought forward, I think this is going to be one day on which the Legislature will look back and say, "On this day, we advanced Ontario a little bit, to the limit of our ability as private members."

Obviously, I'm going to support the bill, and I want to add some perspective on it.

I spent some time as the parliamentary assistant to the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat between 2005 and 2007. To echo some of the comments made in part by some of the other members, for every person, every senior, aged 65 and over today, by the time we, the baby boomers, get to be in our senior years in our peak numbers, there will be two. For every person aged 80 or above alive today, by the time those of us in our age group in this Legislature get to be octogenarians, there will be three. Over the age of 50, the odds of your having some hearing loss are about one in two.

So the question then is, if we're going to do something with regard to assists for those with hearing loss, in whole or in part, what's going to make that decision? Should it be an act of this Legislature, which those of us who are debating this seem to feel it should be, or will it be a consensus forged in expensive and probably needless civil litigation that ends up coming back here and saying, "We have a body of judgments stemming from the courts that suggests the following things. When do we have to get on with it?" I think the member has brought forth a workable, reasonable proposal. I think it's worth acting on, and I certainly will support it.

The prevalence of hearing loss simply rises with age. We are an aging society—

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Speak for yourself.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Some of us, my colleague from Eglinton-Lawrence notices, age more gracefully than others. Nonetheless, as one of my close friends said to me when I was turning 40 and he was turning 60, "The thing about turning 40, in your case, and 60, in my case, is it's way better than the alternative."

Many of us just wished Mayor Hazel McCallion a happy 88th birthday earlier this month.

*Applause.*

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** On the mayor's behalf, thank you. If you can turn 88 and be like Hazel, I'm in.

So with that, Speaker, I'd like to thank you very much for the time. I definitely will be voting for this, and I'm looking forward to hearing further comments on it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis:** I am pleased to rise in support of my honourable colleague the member from Pickering-Scarborough East and his Bill 148, a bill to equip all new provincial and municipal buildings with a visual fire alarm.

It is our responsibility, as a government, to ensure that those who are deaf or hard of hearing have access to information and services that they need, especially ones that save lives. We have done this in a variety of ways.

For example, several government services have a TTY alternative. From Telehealth Ontario to ServiceOntario, those who are hearing-impaired have the same level of access to government services as those who are not.

Another example is access to education. I am proud to talk about my riding of Hamilton Mountain. There are schools there, like Queensdale and G.L. Armstrong, which have classes for hearing-impaired children. I want to personally acknowledge and thank the staff and volunteers who continue to do some great work in those schools. Also, I'd like to acknowledge Scott Lowrey, the principal at G.L. Armstrong, as well as Jodi Turton, who's the vice-principal. The Queensdale principal is Mr. Ted Cambridge.

This bill, if passed, would build on our record of accessibility for Ontarians. In fact, it would increase the accessibility of some of the most vital information a person might need. As the Canadian Hearing Society has indicated, "Accessible emergency notification is an issue of life and death." I agree.

I'm glad we recognized some of our guests here today. I have a special thank you for a friend and someone who has come from Hamilton, Mr. Chris Kenopic, the regional director from Hamilton.

To many Ontarians, this visual alarm would be their only indication that their life is in danger in the case of an emergency. In fact, I've spoken with some Hamiltonians about the importance of this issue. Recently I was speaking with Jim Kay, the chief of Hamilton Emergency Services, and John Verbeek, the public information officer for Hamilton Emergency Services, and they both have said that this would be a great first step. This is a great first step to ensuring that those who are hearing-impaired have access to vital information when they need it most.

I know that in Hamilton we already have visual fire alarms in some of our public buildings. One of those buildings is Copps Coliseum. Copps Coliseum is a facility which can seat up to 19,000 people, and they do have a visual fire alarm. I'm also proud to say that many



Hamilton hotels, as well as some of Hamilton's newest schools, have visual fire alarms.

There is no question that there is more to do. We, as the representatives of the people of Ontario, and I, as a proud representative of Hamilton Mountain, must ensure that all Ontarians receive essential information in times of an emergency. Visual fire alarms are an excellent step in this direction.

I congratulate my colleague from Pickering-Scarborough East for bringing this important bill to this House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** Of course, I have the E.C. Drury School for the Deaf in my riding of Halton, in the town of Milton. In that school, there is a library named for Gary Malkowski, who joins us today in the gallery as the only deaf member to have ever served in this House—although I do call that into question sometimes, as over the last five or six years we've been giving the government all kinds of advice and they haven't seemed to have heard a word of it. So I'm not sure Gary was the only deaf member of this House—certainly by actions, sometimes you wonder.

I think this is a good bill. I would obviously support this bill. As the member from the third party talked about, I would extend the bill. I think that there is a safety issue involved, particularly that safety issue in private homes. I'm not sure what the cost-sharing aspect of that would be, but I think it's something that someone who is handicapped shouldn't be at a disadvantage.

1610

When I use the word "handicapped"—I remember one of the first visits I made to the E.C. Drury School for the Deaf. I was speaking to the students and I used the word "handicapped." I could see immediately that the group I was talking to was perturbed; they were upset. I asked, through the interpreter, what the problem was. They said, "We're not handicapped. We're just deaf. We're not in the least bit handicapped." They don't think of themselves as being handicapped. I thought that was a really wonderful thing, that they were fully prepared to take part in the mainstream of our society. I can say that I haven't made that mistake again.

You'll notice that in our Legislature, when the bells ring—which they will in a few minutes, perhaps—not only do the bells ring, but lights flash alongside them. I suppose that could say all kinds of things about politicians not listening to bells, or not listening at all, but being able to see the flashing lights. It's something that I think is beginning to happen in our society, in our building codes, but it has a long way to go, and this bill will help get down that road. I think it's a good bill and I'll be glad to support it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Ms. Laurel C. Broten:** I'm pleased to join in the debate today with respect to An Act respecting visual fire alarm systems in public buildings, brought forward by

my friend and colleague Wayne Arthurs, the member for Pickering-Scarborough East. I do appreciate that this is not the first time he has brought this important topic before the Legislature.

A great deal has been said this afternoon with respect to the importance of a visual fire alarm system for those who are unable to hear. When we take a look at the content of the bill that's proposed before the Legislature today, and look at the information that is proposed to be included in that visual fire alarm notification—(1) the fact that the fire alarm has been activated; (2) information on the appropriate response, including whether to evacuate the building; and (3) information on the nearest exit—we only need to turn our minds to circumstances when all of us have been notified by a fire alarm in a public building. As a result of being able to hear the notifications on the intercom, we knew that it had been activated. We knew whether or not it was a false alarm or whether we needed to evacuate the building—and at what speed—and to mobilize our family and those around us. We needed to know whether we were going to the right, to the left, up, down—how we were going to exit.

You think about all of the instances in your life where you protect yourself and your family because you hear something. As a mother of two young children, I often think about the challenges that parents have when they don't have the ability, as a deaf or hard of hearing person, to instantaneously know that there is something you need to listen to.

For all of us in our kitchens, it's not unheard of—perhaps I'm sharing that I'm not the world's best cook when I say there has been an instance or two when I have set off the fire alarms in my own home as a result of what's transpiring in the kitchen.

Mr. Jeff Leal: You didn't use it to call supper, did you?

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Laurel C. Broten:** Well, that's always possible.

That notification tells you you need to respond, you need to do something.

For us as public officials to have the opportunity in this Legislature today to take an important step forward, to say let's not build new provincial or municipal public buildings that aren't equipped with the latest in modern technology, to bring us into the 21st century, to provide the information to those who are our constituents so that they can protect themselves, their families, those around them—that's what's incumbent upon us as legislators in an inclusive and democratic society, where we pay attention to how we can save lives. Ultimately, this is what I know my colleague from Pickering-Scarborough East is attempting to do. Let's stand together in the Legislature today and find a way to better protect Ontario citizens, save their lives and move ourselves forward as to how we construct buildings.

Visual fire alarm technology was not always available; it is now. Strobe beacons can provide very important information, and technology such as electronic displays



allows much more detailed and specific information to be provided. It is the opportunity for us to make sure that, as of this Legislature, we'll be moving forward with an important initiative. I'm very proud to stand in support of this bill and to support my colleague, and hope that we will see the Visual Fire Alarm System Act, 2009, coming into effect very shortly.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate? Seeing none, Mr. Arthurs, you have up to two minutes for your response.

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** I want to take the opportunity to thank all of those members who spoke to this bill—I'm sure there would be more if there were time available—but certainly the members from Whitby—Oshawa, Hamilton Centre, Mississauga—Streetsville, Hamilton Mountain, Halton and Etobicoke—Lakeshore. I also want to thank those Ontarians who are here with us specifically today and those who have taken an interest in this bill for their encouragement in that regard.

I want to just capture for a moment what I think is the principal matter that's being raised in addition to the bill, and it's raised pretty consistently around the place during the debate: a combination of, "We should be doing more. We should be doing more in regard to homes," and as the member from Hamilton Centre raised, the difference between this and Bill 59; Bill 59 raised the matter of all public buildings, and this one raises a matter of new provincial and municipal buildings.

We come to politics and we come to this place, often, I think, with a sense of what we would like to do, a great sense of what we would like to accomplish, and I think what people are speaking to here today with respect to this bill are some of those things we would like to do and things we would like to accomplish. I bring the bill forward in a private member's format and function, knowing that at times there are things we can do in this place and there are things we can accomplish. In this particular instance, as much as I would like us to accomplish more under this bill, I'm practical enough to say, in a private member's bill, "I hope and am confident that this is something we might accomplish. This is something we can do as opposed to something that I would like to do." My likes are much bigger. My likes are like those of the other members who spoke. I would like us to be able to move on the adaptive program so that we could provide this type of protection in homes. I would like to see it in existing buildings, but I know that challenges exist when we do that here. So this is what we can do at this point in time, as opposed to what some of us might like to try to achieve.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The time for private members' public business has not quite expired. We are required in the standing orders to spend a full two and a half hours, to give some predictability to when the vote will take place, so bear with me for the next two minutes.

This House stands suspended for two minutes, or we can chat about something for two minutes, and then we'll proceed with the votes.

*The House suspended proceedings from 1618 to 1620.*

## CHILD POVERTY

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The time provided for private members' public business has expired. We will deal first with ballot item number 70, standing in the name of Mr. Berardinetti.

Mr. Berardinetti has moved private members' notice of motion number 77.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Congratulations.

## LITERACY AND BASIC SKILLS

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We will now deal with ballot item number 71, standing in the name of Mr. Dunlop.

Mr. Dunlop has moved private members' notice of motion number 75.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Congratulations.

## VISUAL FIRE ALARM SYSTEM ACT, 2009

### LOI DE 2009 SUR LES SYSTÈMES D'ALARME-INCENDIE À AFFICHAGE VISUEL

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We will now deal with ballot item number 72.

Mr. Arthurs has moved second reading of Bill 148, An Act respecting visual fire alarm systems in public buildings.

Is it the pleasure of House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Mr. Arthurs, any suggestions about the committee?

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** I ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Is it agreed that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly? So ordered.

*Orders of the day.*

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I move adjournment of the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until next Monday at 10:30 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1622.*



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Aggelonitis, Sophia (LIB)	Hamilton Mountain	
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
<b>Arnott, Ted (PC)</b>	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Attorney General / Procureur général
<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)</b>	London West / London-Ouest	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Brotén, Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
<b>Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Economic Development / Ministre du Développement économique
<b>Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
<b>Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
<b>Carroll, Hon. / L'hon. M. Aileen (LIB)</b>	Barrie	Minister of Culture / Ministre de la Culture Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
<b>Crozier, Bruce (LIB)</b>	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)</b>	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
<b>Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)</b>	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Supérieur-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
<b>Horwath, Andrea (NDP)</b>	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Carol (LIB)	Huron–Bruce	
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Murdoch, Bill (IND)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Orazietti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Lecanna (LIB)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)</b>	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)</b>	Scarborough—Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres
		Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches—East York	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)</b>	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of International Trade and Investment / Ministre du Commerce international et de l'Investissement
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London—Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland—Quinte West	
Runciman, Robert W. (PC)	Leeds—Grenville	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)</b>	Nipissing	Minister of Tourism / Ministre du Tourisme
		Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
<b>Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Deputy Premier / Vice-premier ministre
		Minister of Energy and Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Infrastructure
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton—Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga—Erindale	Minister of Small Business and Consumer Services / Ministre des Petites Entreprises et des Services aux consommateurs
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	
<b>Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Perth—Wellington	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
<b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>	Simcoe—Grey	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener—Waterloo	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
		Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

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Garfield Dunlop, Kevin Daniel Flynn  
Tim Hudak, Amrit Mangat  
Phil McNeely, Yasir Naqvi  
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Leeanna Pendergast, Michael Prue  
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Linda Jeffrey, Kuldip Kular  
Rosario Marchese, Bill Mauro  
Carol Mitchell, David Oraziatti  
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Randy Hillier, Lisa MacLeod  
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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jeff Leal  
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Peter Kormos, Jeff Leal  
Dave Levac, Reza Moridi  
Lou Rinaldi, John Yakabuski  
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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Kevin Daniel Flynn  
Laura Albanese, Bas Balkissoon  
Bob Delaney, Joe Dickson  
Kevin Daniel Flynn, Sylvia Jones  
Norm Miller, Mario Sergio  
Peter Tabuns  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent  
des comptes publics**

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Andrea Horwath, Phil McNeely  
Jerry J. Ouellette, Liz Sandals  
Norman W. Sterling, Maria Van Bommel  
David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Paul Miller  
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Gerry Martiniuk, Paul Miller  
Bill Murdoch, Yasir Naqvi  
Michael Prue, Tony Ruprecht  
Mario Sergio  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de  
la politique sociale**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon  
Laurel C. Broten, Kim Craiton  
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo  
Helena Jaczek, Shafiq Qadri  
Khalil Ramal, Peter Shurman  
Elizabeth Witmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Select Committee on Elections / Comité spécial des élections**

Chair / Président: Greg Sorbara  
Howard Hampton, Greg Sorbara  
Norman W. Sterling, David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions / Comité  
spécial sur la santé mentale et les dépendances**

Chair / Président: Kevin Daniel Flynn  
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Elliott  
Bas Balkissoon, Christine Elliott  
Kevin Daniel Flynn, France Gélinas  
Helena Jaczek, Sylvia Jones  
Jeff Leal, Liz Sandals  
Maria Van Bommel  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial











## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

<b>Renewable energy and energy conservation</b>	
Mr. Robert Bailey .....	5086
<b>Teachers</b>	
Mr. Vic Dhillon.....	5086
<b>Israel Apartheid Week</b>	
Mr. Peter Shurman .....	5086
<b>Property taxation</b>	
Ms. Cheri DiNovo.....	5087
<b>Evergreen Hospice</b>	
Ms. Helena Jaczek.....	5087
<b>Renewable energy and energy conservation</b>	
Mr. Ted Chudleigh.....	5087
<b>Minor hockey</b>	
Mr. Lou Rinaldi.....	5088
<b>City of Toronto</b>	
Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti .....	5088
<b>CUPE</b>	
Mr. Monte Kwinter .....	5088
<b>Private members' public business</b>	
The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters).....	5088

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES

<b>Musculoskeletal disorders</b>	
Hon. Peter Fonseca .....	5088
<b>Heart Month</b>	
Hon. Margaret R. Best .....	5089
<b>Musculoskeletal disorders</b>	
Mr. Robert Bailey .....	5090
<b>Heart Month</b>	
Mr. Peter Shurman .....	5090
<b>Musculoskeletal disorders</b>	
Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	5091
<b>Heart Month</b>	
Mme France Gélinas .....	5091

## PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

<b>Assistance to farmers</b>	
Mr. Ernie Hardeman.....	5092
<b>Identity theft</b>	
Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	5092

<b>Hospital funding</b>	
Mr. Bob Delaney .....	5092
<b>Assistance to farmers</b>	
Mr. Garfield Dunlop.....	5092
<b>Workplace harassment</b>	
Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	5093
<b>Firearms control</b>	
Mr. Mario Sergio.....	5093
<b>Health care</b>	
Mr. Robert Bailey.....	5093
<b>Hospital funding</b>	
Mr. Jeff Leal.....	5094
<b>Hospital funding</b>	
Mr. Garfield Dunlop.....	5094
<b>Child custody</b>	
Mr. Jim Brownell .....	5094

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS / AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉS

<b>Child poverty</b>	
Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti.....	5094
Mr. Ted Chudleigh .....	5096
Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....	5097
Ms. Leeanna Pendergast.....	5099
Ms. Helena Jaczek.....	5099
Mrs. Laura Albanese .....	5100
Mr. Garfield Dunlop.....	5100
Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti.....	5101
<b>Literacy and basic skills</b>	
Mr. Garfield Dunlop.....	5101
Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	5103
Mr. Bob Delaney .....	5104
Mr. Robert Bailey.....	5105
Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....	5106
Mr. Mike Colle.....	5106
Mr. Peter Shurman .....	5107
Mr. Ted Chudleigh .....	5108
Mr. Garfield Dunlop.....	5109
<b>Visual Fire Alarm System Act, 2009, Bill 148, Mr. Arthurs / Loi de 2009 sur les systèmes d'alarme-incendie à affichage visuel, projet de loi 148, M. Arthurs</b>	
Mr. Wayne Arthurs .....	5109
Mrs. Christine Elliott.....	5111
Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	5112
Mr. Bob Delaney .....	5114
Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis .....	5114
Mr. Ted Chudleigh .....	5115
Ms. Laurel C. Broten.....	5115
Mr. Wayne Arthurs .....	5116



**Child poverty**

Motion agreed to..... 5116

**Literacy and basic skills**

Motion agreed to..... 5116

**Visual Fire Alarm System Act, 2009, Bill 148,**

**Mr. Arthurs / Loi de 2009 sur les systèmes  
d'alarme-incendie à affichage visuel, projet de loi  
148, M. Arthurs**

Second reading agreed to..... 5116

## CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Thursday 26 February 2009 / Jeudi 26 février 2009

### ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

#### **Green Energy and Green Economy Act, 2009, Bill 150, Mr. Smitherman / Loi de 2009 sur l'énergie verte et l'économie verte, projet de loi 150, M. Smitherman**

Mr. Peter Shurman .....	5065
M. Gilles Bisson .....	5067
Mr. Jim Brownell .....	5068
Mr. Ted Chudleigh .....	5068
Mr. Khalil Ramal .....	5068
Mr. Peter Shurman .....	5069
Mr. Paul Miller .....	5069
Ms. Laurel C. Broten .....	5072
Mr. Peter Shurman .....	5072
Mr. Mike Colle .....	5073
Mr. Ted Chudleigh .....	5073
Mr. Paul Miller .....	5073
Mr. Khalil Ramal .....	5073
Second reading debate deemed adjourned .....	5075

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Hon. John Milloy .....	5075
The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters) .....	5075
Hon. Michael Gravelle .....	5075

#### **Mine to Mace project**

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters) .....	5075
---------------------------------------	------

### ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

#### **Renewable energy and energy conservation**

Mr. Tim Hudak .....	5076
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	5076

#### **Ontario economy**

Mr. Tim Hudak .....	5077
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	5077

#### **Poverty**

Ms. Andrea Horwath .....	5078
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	5078

#### **Tuition**

Ms. Andrea Horwath .....	5078
Hon. John Milloy .....	5079

#### **Energy conservation**

Mr. Peter Shurman .....	5079
Hon. George Smitherman .....	5079

#### **Ontario economy**

Mr. Paul Miller .....	5080
Hon. Michael Bryant .....	5080

#### **Waste management**

Mr. Jim Brownell .....	5080
Hon. John Gerretsen .....	5081

#### **Literacy and basic skills**

Mr. Garfield Dunlop .....	5081
Hon. John Milloy .....	5081

#### **Public health**

Mme France Gélinas .....	5082
Hon. David Caplan .....	5082

#### **City of Toronto**

Mr. Bas Balkissoon .....	5082
Hon. M. Aileen Carroll .....	5082
Hon. Michael Chan .....	5083

#### **Buttonville airport**

Mr. Peter Shurman .....	5083
Hon. James J. Bradley .....	5083

#### **Property taxation**

Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....	5083
Hon. Jim Watson .....	5084

#### **Hospital services**

Mrs. Laura Albanese .....	5084
Hon. David Caplan .....	5084

#### **Hospital services**

Mr. Ted Chudleigh .....	5085
Hon. David Caplan .....	5085

#### **Assistance to farmers**

Mr. Paul Miller .....	5085
Hon. Leona Dombrowsky .....	5085

#### **Correction of record**

Hon. David Caplan .....	5086
-------------------------	------

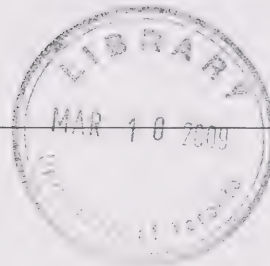
### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters) .....	5086
---------------------------------------	------

*Continued on inside back cover*



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## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 39<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Monday 2 March 2009

Lundi 2 mars 2009

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 2 March 2009

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 2 mars 2009

*The House met at 1030.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by a moment of silence for inner thought and personal reflection.

*Prayers.*

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** I'm delighted to introduce representatives of the Southwest Economic Assembly. The head of it is His Worship Dan Matheson, mayor of Stratford. He's here with Grant Hopcroft, who's head of government relations for the city of London. Welcome.

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I want to ask all the members to welcome visitors today to question period from the Perth Federation of Agriculture and the Wellington Federation of Agriculture. They'll be joining us shortly. They'll be here today to experience Toronto 101. We'll be going to Brampton West with Mr. Dhillon to visit his riding in the urban experience that our farmers will enjoy today.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I want to welcome Josh Bizjak, Seamus Atkinson and Anton Sharplanin to the Legislature this morning.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** On behalf of the member from Trinity-Spadina and page Olivia Mew, We'd like to welcome her mother, Gabi Mew, and her father, Robert Mew, who will be here this morning and this afternoon, sitting in the members' gallery. Welcome.

There being no further introductions, it is now time for oral questions.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** My question is to the Premier. Several weeks ago, you invited the media into your office one by one and told them of an epiphany that you had had, a conversion of sorts, on the road to recession and have-not status. Premier, when are we actually going to see some evidence of that epiphany? Because there certainly isn't any proof of it in your going-in-the-red energy bill.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I appreciate the presentation of the storyline. I see it a little bit differently, you might

imagine. But I think, as my friend eagerly anticipates the coming budget, it's important for us to keep in mind what we've been doing together with Ontarians during the course of the past five years, notwithstanding the fact that the opposition does not support the efforts of Ontarians in this regard.

For example, Ontarians, working hard and well together, are today building hospitals and roads and bridges and courthouses. They are investing in border infrastructure and the like. And that's creating thousands and thousands of jobs. We're talking about billions of dollars in infrastructure investment. That's ongoing. That's the result of decisions we've taken two or three years back. I'm proud of that initiative. There will be more of that to come, but I'd love to have the support of the opposition in that regard.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** In fact, this bill is nothing more than a repeat of the damaging economic policies that we've seen from the Dalton McGuinty government over the past five years, and so it's no surprise that Dalton McGuinty's record for private sector job growth is a paltry 2%. All we see coming out of this bill is a lot of government inspectors brandishing search warrants and harassing businesses and homeowners.

Premier, on Focus Ontario this weekend, your energy minister was asked where the 50,000 new jobs were going to come from, and he said, "Well, how does anyone know these things?" Premier, if your energy minister doesn't know—and it's his bill—do you know where the 50,000 new jobs are going to come from?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I think what Ontarians want to know is, who's for going forward and who's for going back? I think they understand, in their heart of hearts, that the price of oil and gas is going to go up. They understand that whenever we buy oil and gas from outside of Ontario it does not create new jobs in the province of Ontario. They understand that, over time, with the evolution of technology, the price of energy from wind and the sun will come down. They understand that investing in those kinds of technologies creates new jobs in the province of Ontario. They want new jobs, they want clean and green electricity, and they want us to do more in the fight against climate change. I think they're with us in terms of this initiative.

What they really want to know is, why wouldn't the Conservatives, the so-called Progressive Conservatives, support this kind of initiative?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** It sounds like the Premier's advisers on this bill are the same ones who told him that he could close the coal plants by 2007, and we know how valuable that advice was.

If the Premier took the time to consult and listen, he would know this bill is probably the worst thing that he could do during tough economic times. Ontario already has the highest taxation rate on new investments. With this bill, businesses looking to invest and create jobs will see that the cost of energy in Ontario is going to skyrocket and the supply will be very unreliable.

Premier, you lost 71,000 jobs in December alone. Your energy minister can't back up his promise of 50,000 new jobs. Isn't this bill really all about seducing the people of Ontario with green talk to distract them from your disastrous economic record?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I would encourage my honourable colleague to speak with some of the business community in Ontario to get a better understanding of their impression of our new Green Energy Act. For example, Paul Massara, who's chair of the Toronto Board of Trade said, "With the introduction of the Green Energy Act, Ontario will be at the forefront of progress, a dynamic force for change." I know that the Canadian Manufacturers' Association has also said much along the same lines. The Association of Power Producers of Ontario is supportive of the act.

1040

We're talking about a number of business communities. Here's what the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters have to say: We support "the intent of the Green Energy Act to create opportunities for manufacturers and exporters and improve the environment. We recognize the opportunities that this legislation may present for many manufacturers to develop and commercialize new, more efficient products."

We're talking about jobs, economic growth, and at the same time, we're talking about clean and green electricity.

## RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ENERGY CONSERVATION

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** To the Premier about the going-red energy bill. Last week, when the minister was asked about warrantless searches, he didn't seem to know what the media were talking about. I'm happy to familiarize him with the bill. This bill allows intrusion into businesses without warrant. But furthermore, and more importantly, it allows government inspectors to go into private residences with a warrant to get the audit papers.

Premier, will you admit that you've taken the nanny state to a very scary new level and you're now forcing your way into people's homes?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'm going to allow the minister to speak to this momentarily. Let me just say at the outset that I understand where the opposition is coming from on this score, but to somehow frighten Ontar-

ians into thinking that there are some nefarious undertones associated with this bill is less than forthright. Our intention, and we are open to positive and constructive amendments, is to ensure that Ontario can leap forward, that we can move beyond old energy sources of the past, that we can take advantage of clean and green sources of electricity, that we can create new jobs at the same time and that we can do more to fight climate change as privileged global citizens. That's our intention, but I know the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure will want to speak to some of the details momentarily.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Premier, this is like 1984 all over again, and I am not talking about the year. What the Premier is saying in this bill is that he is going to treat law-abiding citizens in the province of Ontario like common criminals. He's going to allow government inspectors armed with search warrants to barge into people's homes and rifle through their personal belongings and papers to find an energy audit paper.

Premier, how can you justify such an intrusion into the privacy of people's homes in Ontario in 2009?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** Firstly, I want to thank the honourable member—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. George Smitherman:** It is not so. Firstly—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The honourable member might want to listen to the answer, seeing as he just asked the question. Please continue.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** On a matter of clarification, the honourable member has just come from an hour-long briefing with my deputy minister and senior officials at their request, for the second time, where he could have posed the same question and received the same answer as I'll offer now.

Firstly, there is no opportunity for warrantless search. He said they'd knock on the door, arriving with the search warrant in hand, but the bigger point is, only in the circumstances where a piece of legislation uses the word "mandatory" do governments seek the opportunity to address that in circumstances where it hasn't been abided by. The language in this legislation is identical to that in a 2002 bill that came from the opposite party. But I'm very happy to have a conversation with the member in the context of whatever amendments might be helpful to make the bill better. This is certainly one of those things I'd be very happy to talk to him—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** This is nothing but an outright assault on the private property rights of individuals in this province. They're going to treat Ontarians like criminals, violating their privacy rights while they're picking their pockets with skyrocketing energy prices and a new tax. There's nothing green about putting families and busi-



nesses in the red, and citizens are seeing red over the intrusion on their privacy rights.

Premier, do you really think that you're going to get away with this tawdry, green-tinged seduction of Ontarians?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** We've had evidence—in fact, I've twice paid at least \$10 for a CD of the member's artistic creativity and it's nice to see more of it on offer today.

On the matter he raises, though, as I assume he means that to be a serious matter, as I've said already, there is no such mechanism for intrusion into the private residences of individuals unless in a circumstance under investigation where a mandatory element of a legislation has not been fulfilled—and through the courts. But more importantly, as we move toward committee, we assume opportunities for enhancement and improvement to the bill.

If this is the primary matter of concern for the opposition, I give them every indication that I'm happy to have a conversation after question period. I'm very certain we can make progress on this very specific point of it and hear other points of concern from the honourable member and other members of the Legislature.

#### DON JAIL

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** My question is for the Premier. On Friday, the member for Welland and I accepted an invitation to tour and see the Don jail. We did, in fact, see the Don jail. We saw first-hand the conditions that can only be termed squalid, overcrowded and inhumane. One can see why Ontario Justice Richard Schneider called the Don jail "an embarrassment to the Canadian criminal justice system."

Premier, you received the same invitation to tour and see the Don jail. Can I ask when the Premier is going to accept?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** There's absolutely no question that the inaction of other governments, the inability of other governments to put money into building correctional institutions, the inaction of the NDP government from 1990 to 1995, the inaction and the threat of closure by the Conservative government from 1995 to 2003 obviously set some challenges for us. We are meeting those challenges. We are committed to building new facilities to increase bed capacity. We will not stand by and watch the corrections system deteriorate as the NDP and the Conservatives did.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Well, these are fine words, but the people of Ontario have heard these fine words from Liberals before. Members of the Liberal government—or the now-Liberal government—visited the Don jail in 2003. These are some of the things they said: "It's horrible. It's tough, I can't tell you." "There are guys being peed on." "People are being treated like animals." People who are psychiatrically incapable of dealing with themselves or handling themselves are incarcerated here."

That is what Liberals had to say five years ago, now going on six years, and in fact conditions have gotten worse over the last five and a half years. Why should people have any confidence in the McGuinty Liberal government, that you're going to do something now, when in fact you've allowed conditions to get worse over the last five and a half years?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** Quite frankly, because we are allowing our actions to speak for what we plan on doing, not what the NDP government did. We must remind everyone in the province of Ontario that when the NDP formed government, they cut correctional budgets by \$20 million in 1993-94. They cut \$13 million in 1994-95. In those two years, they built no increased capacity. In those two years, they turned their backs on correctional officers. In those two years, they slapped them around and said "You'll either do what we say or we'll impose a social contract." No, our government treats their workers differently, and our government plans on increasing capacity with new institutions.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** It amazes me how nasty Liberals want to be to that good Liberal, Bob Rae.

This is about conditions at the Don jail today. This is about people who have been released from psychiatric institutions because there are no more beds in the psychiatric institutions, and instead, they're incarcerated at the Don jail. This is about people who bang their heads against steel bars and cement walls. This is about people who have drug addictions, who can't get any help. In some cases, this is about people who have been picked up on a warrant, and they're next to somebody who is charged with three or four murders. This is about a condition that has gotten worse and worse under a McGuinty government that promised, five and a half years ago, that they were going to deal with the problem immediately.

Tell me, why does this disgrace in international law terms, in international human rights terms, continue in Ontario under a McGuinty government—

1050

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** Let me use his words, Speaker. He says it was a disgrace, and it was a disgrace. We've decided that we will be very proactive at increasing capacity, so our capacity will increase by over 1,200 beds. We will ensure that the working conditions are improving.

Not like them and not like the previous Conservative government, we are continuing and we will continue to address the concerns in our correctional institutions, because we understand the importance of them and the people who work there. We will not turn our backs on them as the NDP government did.

#### FOREST INDUSTRY

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** My question is to the Premier. In 2005, with much boasting, the McGuinty government announced a \$150-million forest sector prosper-



ity fund and a \$350-million loan guarantee fund. Through a freedom-of-information request, we have learned that of the \$500 million that was promised, a staggering \$373 million is uncommitted and untouched. That means 75% of the assistance package that the McGuinty government boasted about for the forest sector has never been touched.

When tens of thousands of forest sector workers in northern Ontario have had their jobs destroyed and forest sector communities have been devastated, can the McGuinty government tell us why 75% of the boasted-about assistance package has never been touched, never been utilized?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Natural Resources.

**Hon. Donna H. Cansfield:** I'm more than pleased to be able to respond on the prosperity fund, which was put in place to help the forestry sector.

As you know, we have a challenge. AbitibiBowater is currently facing some very serious issues, and I'll use that as an example. We recently gave them—they had asked for a grant of \$1.6 million. That was based on the fact that they were going to invest a significant amount of money, up to \$10 million, in their kraft mill, and they have not done that. Therefore, they have not accepted the grant yet. So what has happened is that, yes, there are places within the prosperity fund where in fact the companies have not been in a position to take the money that has been offered to them.

I've now just had another—Firelogic Inc. this morning—that has come in and has indicated that they now have their financing in place and are ready to accept their grant. This is just an example of what we are doing to help the forestry sector.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I don't know what planet members of the McGuinty government are on, because forest sector companies and forest sector communities and unions and workers told you that there were major problems with your program and companies wouldn't be able to utilize it. Instead, this is what the McGuinty government said. The previous Minister of Natural Resources said, "We have had a very positive response from the forest industry to the forest sector prosperity fund.... We expect that 100% of the prosperity fund will be committed to investments ... by the end of 2006." Here we are now, 2009, and 75% of the money has not been used.

I ask again, when tens of thousands of workers have lost their jobs, when dozens of communities have been devastated by the loss of forest sector jobs, what's the McGuinty government's excuse for three quarters of the prosperity fund sitting there while more workers become unemployed every day?

**Hon. Donna H. Cansfield:** The bottom line is, you cannot sell a product if you don't have a market for it.

But let me just share with this particular member that in fact Abitibi in Fort Frances-Rainy River received \$16,152,255 for a boiler. The fact is, the money has been announced. They need to be able to pick it up with

matched grants. That was the way it was set up. They've declined that, but we do have the monies here for the companies and we are working with them.

We just announced a new bio-energy product—a request for interest for a new product. We are working with OPG in this particular case.

We realize that there are extraordinary challenges facing this industry. It is a global issue. You cannot produce for a market that doesn't exist. Maybe that's where this member doesn't quite get it.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** What we get and what workers get is that the McGuinty government goes across the province boasting about \$500 million for assistance. The workers themselves and the community leaders tell you they're not going to be able to access this money; it doesn't address their needs.

I'll tell you, there is something you could use it for: Abitibi wants to sell off their power dams, power dams that support 1,000 jobs at the mill in Fort Frances and support 1,000 jobs at the mill in Iroquois Falls. The McGuinty government could take the money that is not being used in this fund right now, flow it to the municipalities, allow them to buy the power dams and use those power dams to support those jobs. Instead you're going to allow Abitibi to sell off the power dams to a company that couldn't give a damn how many jobs are lost in northern Ontario.

If you want to use that money, Premier, use that money today. Tell the communities of Iroquois Falls, Fort Frances and Kenora you're going to flow this money so they can buy the—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Donna H. Cansfield:** I do not have any proposal in front of me from AbitibiBowater with respect to the sale of any dams. If this member has some information that I'm not privy to, I'd be more than pleased to receive it from him. I do not have a proposal in front of me.

The fact of the matter is that we have committed over \$120 million, through this fund, to companies, and they are in different processes in terms of accessing those dollars. We're working with them.

The challenge, as I indicated, facing the forest industry is not new. It is one that has been going on for over two years. There is no market for the product. The member doesn't seem to understand this. It's one of the reasons why we've been doing the added-value market products. This is one of the reasons why we put out a request for interest. It's very clear, the member—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. I just remind the member of the third party that he did ask the question. He should have been listening to the answer.

## RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ENERGY CONSERVATION

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** My question is for the Minister of Consumer Services. Dalton McGuinty's power grab



will be catastrophic for consumers. Energy bills could be 30% higher. Consumer choice will be eliminated. The minister will pick our energy consumption for us. Rates alone will increase from 5.5 cents to 46 cents; that's nine times higher. The bill overrules contract law and title law by favouring renewable energy projects over real property agreements. Finally, it establishes the toaster police, who have vast search-and-seizure powers on household appliances, and if you get in their way, you might face \$25,000 in fines. I can't believe that you, as Minister of Consumer Services, would allow this. Were you consulted on the bill? If not, why not? And if so, how could you let this bill pass, as Minister of Consumer Services?

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** To the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, please.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** I'm pleased to have an opportunity to address some of the misinformation that the honourable member has offered. Firstly, on this very last point that the honourable member has made, I do want to make note that any inspection powers that were proposed in the bill were identical to those from the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act of 2002. Certainly if the honourable member reads the bill, she'll see that there is no warrantless search opportunity as has been speculated upon.

More to the point, the honourable member is just plain wrong with respect to the numbers. She's operating on the idea that we're going to stop using Niagara Falls, we're going to close down our nuclear plants and we're going 100% renewables, when to the contrary, what we're seeking to do is enhance the proportion somewhat of renewable energy in our supply mix. Over a 15-year period with the investments that are anticipated, we see about a 1% increase on people's bills related to the Green Energy Act.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I didn't realize that the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure actually got a new portfolio for consumer protection.

To the Minister of Consumer Services: You have some explaining to do. This is the biggest threat to consumer protection in this province's history—more taxes, more bureaucrats, more government intrusion onto real property. How can any of that be good for Ontario's consumers? Enough is enough. Will the Minister of Consumer Services educate the Minister of Energy on the consequences consumers will face as the result of this power grab? Will he stand up for consumers so they won't face skyrocketing energy increases at a time when we can ill afford to raise anyone's standard-of-living expenses?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** The consumers in the province of Ontario will be given the opportunity to purchase energy which is cleaner and greener, which is lighter on the footprint on the environment and which enhances the opportunities for jobs in the green economy. These investments in renewable energy alongside investments in conservation will allow people to go about their lives with a cleaner, greener supply of electricity while,

at the same time, using less electricity on a day-to-day basis. Associated with the investments which are front-end loaded on distribution, which is called the smart grid, or on transmission, we anticipate about \$5 billion of investment in the next three years, starting in 2010. We anticipate that the incremental additional cost to the ratepayer will be 1% per year. It runs quite counter to the hyperbole offered by the honourable member. I look forward to more opportunities to speak to her on this important subject.

1100

## EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is to the Premier. Once again, the numbers show the disastrous state of our economy. Close to another 150 jobs are expected to disappear in Wheatley at the Omstead Foods vegetable processing plant. The fourth-quarter GDP numbers are almost certain to show that Ontario's GDP is shrinking by at least 4% annually. EI claims are up 30% year over year, with many communities up as much as 50%. We're now at over 300,000 manufacturing jobs lost over the last four years.

The NDP has a five-part jobs plan. Where is yours?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** There's no question that these job losses are extremely, extremely tough on the individuals involved, the families, the communities in particular. The member is also aware of the fact that this is affecting all countries, all jurisdictions. There are a variety of causes across the globe. But the bottom line is, it's very tough on these families.

I'll note nonetheless that as a result of the fiscal shape that Canada and Ontario are in going into these tough times, the Canadian economy contracted at an annualized rate of 3.4% in the fourth quarter, as compared with a 6.2% decline in the US economy. That's a very significant contraction nonetheless, but it is to say that in Canada, relatively speaking, we are in fact under way with a jobs program and an economic strategy that's allowed us to get hit a lot less—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Again, we've laid out a plan that will get Ontario workers back to work.

We need an aggressive 60% Ontario content in green energy, as they have in Quebec. We have a company in Hamilton that has 75% of their workers laid off, National Steel Car, which is quite capable of retrofitting their plant to build wind turbines and other things. Seventy-five per cent of their people are out of work.

We need a \$10.25-an-hour minimum wage immediately to put money in the pockets of people who will spend it in Ontario.

We also need 50% of transit, streetcars and subway cars, to be built in Ontario.

Once again, the NDP has a jobs plan. Where's the government's plan?



**Hon. Michael Bryant:** On the contrary, there's nothing in the New Democrats' jobs plan that has anything in terms of industry investments in companies. On the other hand, this government, for the past few years, has been investing literally hundreds of millions of dollars that have leveraged billions of dollars of investments in other companies.

The member mentions a company in his community. In fact, this company, and I'd be happy to work with them, can work with the Ontario government, which could see an investment that would jumpstart any company and allow it to jump ahead of its competitors. That's the purpose of the industrial funds. That's the purpose of an economic strategy that involves interventions to assist companies directly so that they in fact can not only weather the storm but in some cases expand.

Yes, we're getting hit, but we are not getting hit nearly as hard as they are being hit in Japan, as they are being hit in the European Union and in the United States. That's thanks in part to the fiscal situation we're in, thanks in part to our financial system, and thanks in part to an investment strategy that—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### UNIVERSITY FUNDING

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. It is a well-known fact that this province's highly skilled workforce is one of our greatest assets. However, our new knowledge-based economy seems to require an ever-increasing level of education. It is estimated that seven out of every 10 jobs created in Ontario will require post-secondary education or training.

As a result, demand on Ontario's universities for professional or research-based graduate programs has increased significantly. We know that we are now competing with jurisdictions such as China and India, where there is a strong emphasis on higher learning, and we need to do the same.

Minister, how will you ensure that Ontario's students have access to the higher education that is now demanded of them to compete in the global, knowledge-based economy?

**Hon. John Milloy:** I thank the honourable member for the question as well as his advocacy for higher education in particular. I know how proud he is to represent Carleton University in Ottawa.

The member is absolutely right. We have to continue to make investments in higher education at the university level, particularly in the graduate area. That's why I was pleased on Friday to formally announce that Ontario will be investing \$51.6 million to create almost 3,300 new graduate spaces over the next two years. This means an additional 1,925 new master's spaces and 1,373 new Ph.D. spaces. This builds on our government's Reaching Higher plan and allows for study in such areas as environmental studies, engineering and other key areas for our economy.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Minister, last week's announcement means that Carleton University, in my riding, will receive \$1.05 million, resulting in a total of 67 new spaces in master's and Ph.D.-level programs. Neighbouring University of Ottawa will receive 277 additional spaces.

In a conversation I had with the president of Carleton, Dr. Roseann Runte, she indicated that the new funding will help the university expand research in selected areas. Although Carleton is pleased with the additional support, I know that they could expand graduate programs in other areas as well. Minister, could you please tell me why some institutions receive more spaces than others?

**Hon. John Milloy:** I think all members from the Ottawa area and all members in the Legislature should be very proud of the outstanding work that's being done both at Carleton University and the University of Ottawa.

In fact, in the last two rounds of graduate space allocations, Carleton University received 572 new spots, and the University of Ottawa, 1,365. In this most recent round, Ontario's largest research-intensive universities received 75% of the new spaces that were allocated, which allows us to build and leverage upon existing capacity within the system and build at those research-intensive universities, to allow us to again move ahead and prosper with one of the finest post-secondary institutions in the world.

#### SENIOR CITIZENS

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** My question is to the minister responsible for seniors. Minister, as you know, seniors are the cornerstone on which our province has been built. As you also know, your government has driven Ontario into have-not status, destroying decades of their hard work and perseverance.

It's hard to be a senior in Ontario today, Minister. The savings they have relied on for their retirement have evaporated due to the stock market crisis, and increased property assessments have raised their property taxes. Seniors now fear for their financial security. Minister, why have you been so silent on the new energy bill when you know it hits seniors hard when they can least afford it?

**Hon. M. Aileen Carroll:** I will refer that question to my colleague the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** I do want to thank the honourable member for the question, and I do agree with him about the necessity of being very sensitive to electricity use and to the implications for any ratepayer, including for seniors.

The fact of the matter is that the Green Energy Act has an opportunity to advance our economic interests and to enhance the renewable energy that is in the supply mix. That's why a cornerstone of the Green Energy Act is working and investing in local communities and in the operations of people's homes to lessen their electricity use so that the impact in terms of the overall bill is not so substantial.



I'll be very happy to listen carefully to any suggestions that the honourable member has about how we can better tailor conservation efforts to our seniors so as to lighten any of the possible impacts from rising electricity prices.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I'm sorry. With that answer, the minister of everything has made clear to seniors that he is not in their corner. The Minister of Natural Resources, for that matter, whose riding has the highest percentage of seniors in this entire province, has also neglected their interests by remaining silent.

Will the minister responsible for seniors commit now to educating the Minister of Energy about the hardships that this bill will cause for seniors and promise to protect them from unsustainable energy costs?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** First off, I do want to remind the honourable member that we have increased the property tax grant for seniors. That was in a budget that I believe the honourable member and his party chose not to support.

I think it is important, no matter what technology you're behind, to recognize that energy prices are under pressure to increase. Their plan is to take coal stacks that presently go up and to stick them down in the ground. That's an unproven technology, and it sounds quite costly to many people.

What we're offering is an opportunity for conservation initiatives, to lessen the impact that people have on the earth and to lessen their use of electricity so as to balance out any of those challenges around rising electricity prices.

Like I said, my mother is a senior, as an example. She has a smart meter. She looks forward to the opportunity to be able to use that in a fashion that allows her to manage her energy use more effectively.

I look forward to further opportunities to engage with the honourable member on this very important subject.

1110

## PROTECTION FOR MINERS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour le premier ministre. Miners at the Hemlo goldfield have contracted silicosis, a potentially fatal disease that drastically affects their quality of life. These miners can't breathe.

Last night, CBC News: Sunday documented the difficulties very sick miners are having with WSIB because the sick miners must prove they contracted silicosis from working in the mines.

Is making them jump through bureaucratic hoops the best we can do for those sick people?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** The Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** First off, I want to thank the member for the question, and I want to commend my colleague the Minister of Northern Development and Mines for his advocacy, his hard work, his commitment and the dedication that he has exhibited on these matters.

The health and safety of Ontario workers is our number one priority. I know our ministry staff has been working very closely with the employer, with the Hemlo-area mines, the employees, the families, in that area to make sure that they are not at risk of silica exposure.

We've collaborated with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board and the United Steelworkers to exchange information and develop strategies for the Hemlo mines area. This is working. The ministry continues to monitor those Hemlo mines very closely. We want to ensure that all those miners are taken care of, that they are—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** The WSIB has already recognized that miners in the Hemlo goldfields suffer from silicosis as a result of their occupation, and they have approved some of the claims.

When the Liberals were in opposition, they knew the right thing to do. They were calling what was happening an "epidemic" of silicosis, and they were calling for an inquiry. Now that they are in power, can they remember the right thing to do?

Rather than watching these sick people spend their last breath fighting the WSIB, will the minister ensure those miners are treated fairly and ask the WSIB to expedite the approval of their claims?

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** What I can assure the member is that our number one commitment is to the health and safety of all Ontario workers. We've done a great deal of work in terms of the injury rates in mines. They are way, way down—over 50% down in many cases.

Also, under the leadership of Premier McGuinty and my colleague Chris Bentley, when he was the Minister of Labour, as well as Mike Gravelle, the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, Ontario's occupational exposure limits—there are now 725 chemical hazards that we look at. We now review those hazards every year. Unfortunately, when that government was in power and that government was in power, they only reviewed it twice in 12 years.

## EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** My question is for the Minister of Education. This government believes that the best way to build a strong publicly funded education system is to involve our education partners, such as parents, teachers and students.

In January, this government announced continued funds for Parents Reaching Out grants. More than 1,300 projects are being funded through a nearly \$2-million investment across the province for the year 2008-09. This funding will go to local school councils and also to regional parent-engagement projects. Would the minister explain what this means for children and families in Ontario?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Our whole approach to improving publicly funded education rebuilding has been a collaborative one, and one of the groups of people that



has been most important for us to work with is the parents of the kids in our schools.

A few years ago, what parents said to us was, "It would be great if there were a fund that we could apply to for projects that we think are important in our community." So that's exactly what we've set up. It's \$1.1 million for school council projects; about \$900,000 for regional and provincial projects. What that means is that workshops to increase engagement of parents in their kids' education happen at parents' schools. Projects that engage the whole community, especially in isolated communities, are funded by these dollars. Outreach by the local school to increase awareness of the importance of parent engagement, and translation of materials for parents who don't speak English or French as their first language, to engage those parents in the education of their—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I know that in my riding of London-Fanshawe, parents put a lot of time, energy and creativity into the applications for these projects. People in my riding are extremely pleased that we are able to support innovative projects in the London area that will encourage more parents to become engaged. I know they have benefited from more than \$35,000 provided for the school council to initiate these projects and to engage people, to spend on speaking engagements and also school events for families, students and teachers. I also understand that these "parents reaching out" grants are a part of our plan to make it easier for parents to participate in these issues.

Would the minister tell us what else our government is doing in this regard?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, one of the hallmarks of this MPP's tenure is that he is very connected to the schools. He knows what's going on with the parents, with the community and in his schools. I just want to give him credit.

We understand that if families are connected to schools, kids do better at school, so we have established parent-involvement committees at the regional level so that, across a board, schools and school councils can talk to each other, share best practices and educate each other, because building capacity among parents is an important aspect of this work. We've funded 123 parenting and family literacy centres. What those do is help parents, before their kids start school, get used to the school, used to the routines. It breaks down those barriers, because, let's face it, not all parents are comfortable bringing their kids into the school. So those parent and family literacy centres—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ENERGY CONSERVATION

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** My question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, the public was shocked to

learn, as they watched Focus Ontario on Saturday, that despite your claim that 50,000 jobs would be created when you introduced your new bill, you don't have any idea as to when, if or how those jobs will be created. It appears that you are trying to seduce the public with the mantra of green without doing the necessary in-depth analysis.

I ask you, is this promise of 50,000 jobs like your broken promise to close all the coal plants by 2007?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** I can tell you one thing: It's not like the honourable member's promise not to close hospitals.

I thank the honourable member for the question. What we're anticipating in the first three years, starting in 2010, associated with the implementation of the Green Energy Act, is the opportunity for 50,000 additional jobs in the province of Ontario in all forms. We anticipate that the investments associated with the transmission and distribution system of \$3.2 billion will account for about half of those. In addition, we will see renewables coming to life in the province of Ontario and a very, very strong focus on the conservation side of the Green Energy Act, including \$300 million of investment in our largest industrial concerns so as to help them emerge using less electricity.

Across the landscape of these investments, we feel quite confident that 50,000 jobs will be created.

Of course, once the bill is passed, hoping the honourable member will support it, we have the opportunity to implement—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** The fact remains that the minister has no idea when, how or if the 50,000 jobs will be created. In fact, it's been very astonishing to see last week, in response to his critics in the media, how very few answers he actually has to specific questions. He has no answers for the jobs, targets, prices, etc., and yet he ridiculed our critic when he wanted to send it to committee so that we could have a very informed and productive debate. He is now saying, because he has no answers, that he's going to roll out some announcements and some answers over the next three to four months.

I ask you, Minister, was this early introduction of your bill without any answers an attempt to divert attention away from your abysmal economic track record that shows you lost 71,000 jobs in January alone and that we're going to become a have-not province on April 1?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** I do want to say to the honourable member, of course, that associated with an initiative like this is economic modelling. The proof is in the opportunity to implement it, and that's why I am hoping for the honourable member's support as the bill moves forward.

1120

We do have jurisdictions that have had extraordinary success with employment related to initiatives very similar to this. There are very powerful examples from other jurisdictions that have taken the tack of making it easier to implement renewable energy and bringing a much



stronger focus on conservation. Jobs in transmission, in distribution, in the development of new renewable projects, in the retrofit of homes and industry: These are all opportunities to give people employment. At the beginning of last week, there was a big focus on home energy audits. By the end of the week, we were receiving calls from people who wished to find out how they could be employed in such endeavours. This is an example of the opportunities.

### UNIVERSITY FUNDING

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Let's look at our Ontario universities: larger classes; increased dependence on part-time, temporary faculty; tuition hikes; and increased student debt. Now we learn that Ontario universities have been forced to acquire substantial long-term debt to deal with rising enrolments, infrastructure renewal, program expansion and capital projects, to compensate for the lowest per capita grant funding in the country. The long-term debt of Ontario universities totals over \$2.6 billion. The average long-term debt being carried by each Ontario university is \$147 million.

Your underfunding has mortgaged the future of Ontario universities. This, my friend, is a mess. What are you going to do about it?

**Hon. John Milloy:** As I've said before in this House, I'll certainly acknowledge that many sectors of our economy face challenges right now. But I reject the premise of the honourable member's question. Ontario boasts one of the finest post-secondary education systems in the world. Four years ago, under the vision of this Premier, we invested \$6.2 billion in post-secondary education in order to give it the boost that is needed in the areas of quality and accessibility. These are the results: 100,000 more students in post-secondary education, one of the highest rates in the western world; graduation rates have gone up 8% at colleges and 3% at universities; last year, Ontario's universities hired approximately 1,800 new faculty, more than half in the tenure stream; and I'd remind the honourable member that 37,000 foreign students come every year—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** There is, my friend, a great dissonance between universities being on the verge of bankruptcy and your saying that things are great. The problem is that the average annual cost of servicing this debt is approximately \$10 million per university. A National Post article says the government of Ontario is complicit by allowing its university sector to take on more massive amounts of debt as a substitute for more government funding. Universities cannot continue like this. We thought last week that the Premier was serious about saving post-secondary education, but Ontario universities are on the verge of bankruptcy and I'm not quite sure you realize how serious this is. You are playing with the future of our students. When are you going to move

away from your stock answer and the fact that we are number 10 in per capita funding, and deal with this mess?

**Hon. John Milloy:** We continue to work with all of our institutions and, as I said, of course we recognize there are challenges right now in the current state of the economy. But let me remind the honourable member that this year, operating funding for colleges and universities increased by 57% since 2003. Per student funding to both colleges and universities since 2003—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. John Milloy:** Let me give the figures: colleges, nearly \$1,800, a 40% increase; universities, over \$1,400, a 21% increase. I remind the member again that I will put our record up against his record any day of the week, when we talk about an NDP government that cut student aid, that cut funding to post-secondary education and that allowed tuition to increase by 50%. We have a record we're proud of, and we're going to continue to build upon that record.

### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Last month, Metrolinx, the regional transportation authority for the GTA and Hamilton, announced a revised proposal to expand GO Transit service through the Georgetown corridor and build an air link that would connect Union Station to Pearson airport.

The York South-Weston community was pleased to learn that the new proposal addressed some of their main concerns and now includes a full GO station in Weston, expanded all-day GO service and a stop for the air-rail link, while minimizing street closures. Metrolinx has just finished conducting open houses to consult with the communities along the corridor. Two of these open houses were held in the riding of York South-Weston.

Minister, could you please share with us the outcome of these consultations and what the next main steps will be?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I'd like to thank the member for York South-Weston for her advocacy on this issue. It has been excellent.

During the month of February, Metrolinx held six all-day, community open house events throughout Toronto, Mississauga and Georgetown in order to hear from the public on the Georgetown south service expansion and the Union Station-Pearson rail link. More than 700 people attended to ask questions and leave comments with the people who were there, the project's technical team. The input received from these community consultations is being carefully reviewed by the project team and will then feed into the environmental assessment process, once that begins.

Public consultation has played a large role in how we're moving forward. In fact, the creation of a stop in Weston was a direct result of the concerns heard by the folks in the area and the advocacy of the member for York South-Weston. We're looking forward to even more input—



**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** It is very important that the community continues to be consulted and informed about the next stages in the process. It is also important that the community receive clear and consistent information.

It has come to my attention that there are some concerns regarding the future of the newly proposed full GO station in Weston. In particular, the concerns are that this station would be removed once the Eglinton LRT connection is built. Minister, could you please reassure the community that the GO station in Weston will not be closed or moved as a result of the future Eglinton LRT station?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I would like to assure the member that her community and all communities along the Georgetown south corridor will continue to be consulted and informed on the next stages of this process. I would also like to assure the member that there will be a stop in Weston and that this stop will stay open even if an Eglinton rail station is created. Anything heard otherwise is simply a scurrilous rumour. It is important that those with questions on matters like this contact Metrolinx and contact the project team in order to clarify concerns and minimize confusion.

This is one of the first projects to be implemented from the Big Move, Metrolinx's regional transportation plan for the GTA and Hamilton. Service expansion will make it easier to get around the region, create construction jobs, spur economic growth, reduce the burden of traffic congestion and reduce air pollution. We are hoping to begin work next winter with—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question?

### SCHOOL CALENDAR

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** My question is to the Minister of Education. I hope the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure does not answer it.

Once again, I rise in my place to remind the Minister of Education and Mr. McGuinty that you are continuing to create policies on the back of a napkin with no thought given to the long-range implication of those policies. You're well aware that parents across the province were surprised, confused and strongly, strongly object to losing the last week of summer with their children. Two short years after the creation of Family Day, these parents are now faced with sacrificing the last week of family vacation because their school boards can't find enough teaching days to accommodate the mandated PD days.

Minister, are you planning to approve every school board calendar that sends our students back to school before Labour Day?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Powerful as we are, we cannot control leap years and when Labour Day falls. It's impossible for us to do that. We have an Education Act that requires 194 instructional days in the year. Each board is now submitting their calendar to us. We'll be looking at those.

1130

What needs to happen is that boards work with their communities, because there will be different solutions depending on the community. There are some communities where vast numbers of people are away right up till the end of August. They go to cottages—whatever; they have plans. There are other communities where that is not the case. The boards need to be working with those communities, working out the plan. We cannot control when Labour Day falls.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** Labour Day is always the first Monday of September. That's an institution.

These policies have not been thought through, and the repercussions are not thought through. From the CNE to the farms in rural Ontario, employers want to know: Where are they going to find labour to compensate for the students who will be returning to class on September 1 instead of September 8? This is also crucial revenue for our students in a tough economy, revenue that their parents may be counting on to supplement tuition fees. Minister, will you be stepping in to create uniformity and require that all school boards ensure that classes do not start before the day after Labour Day, which is September 8, or will you be content to once again watch it unfold from—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I appreciate the member opposite letting me know how Labour Day works.

Regulation 304 of the Education Act states that there have to be a minimum of 194 instructional days. Boards are required to submit to the ministry a school-year calendar for each school year. The deadline is May 1 of each year. Boards may request permission of the minister to use a modified school calendar, so we do have a role to play in that. The deadline for those modified calendars is March 1, so those are now in the ministry. If a board proposes a modified calendar, they also have to submit documentation that they have talked with their community, that they have consulted with stakeholders and that they have made decisions that make sense for their community. I know the member opposite is interested in fear-mongering and making this a much bigger issue than it is, but, in fact, each board needs to work with their school community, and I'll be—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

### COMPOSTING

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is to the Minister of the Environment. The McGuinty government pushed municipalities to increase the recycling of food waste through green bin programs before developing a province-wide composting strategy. Municipalities followed orders, but now the local processing facilities process increasing volumes of green bin waste. As a result, green bin materials are being illegally dumped, incinerated and trucked to Quebec and New York state, increasing greenhouse gas emissions. When will this government finally develop a



province-wide composting strategy and address the shortage of local compost-processing facilities?

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** As the member knows, about a third of all the waste that's being generated in the province of Ontario is compostable material, whether it's foodstuffs or what have you. He has put his finger on a situation that certainly needs to be addressed. As he also knows, there have been a number of firms that have opened up facilities in Ontario just within the last couple of years to deal with compostable material. He also knows that right now we're reviewing the Waste Diversion Act to make sure that the act is up to date and, what's even better, that people do the right thing and compost as much as possible, as well as get involved in a number of the other recycling programs. It's the right thing to do; we're working with the community; we want to encourage industries to set up facilities where compost material can be brought and can be properly recycled.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** The fact is that the government has plunged ahead with a green bin program without knowing how to deal with increased amounts of organic waste. Now they are making it almost impossible for new compost-processing plants to get up and running, turning down environmental approvals for minor reasons in places like Peterborough. Why won't the minister admit that his government has bungled the green bin program and has to do something to fix it?

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** I could never agree with that because, as a matter of fact, we think that composting is the right thing to do. As a matter of fact, in the same article that he's probably referring to, it makes reference that there have been two new Ontario facilities opened just within the last year, in London and Welland. Yes, there should be many more of those facilities opening up, and we will be working with industry and with the municipalities to make sure that we divert as much material as possible from our landfill sites. Yes, we will have to get new facilities up and running, and we're putting policies in place to actually make that happen.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The time for question period has ended.

There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1135 to 1300.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I take this opportunity to welcome a group of students from the Old Colony Christian school in the riding of Elgin-Middlesex-London. They'll be joining us this afternoon.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm delighted today to recognize the work of Nishnawbe-Aski Nation in partnership with

the Trillium Gift of Life Network in raising awareness in aboriginal communities to encourage individuals to register their consent for organ and tissue donation. Together, they have produced an informative brochure, available in English, Ojibway and Cree, to encourage organ and tissue donation in the Nishnawbe Aski First Nation's 49 communities, an area covering two thirds of Ontario.

Grand Chief Stan Beardy has taken a lead role in driving the education of First Nations on the issue of organ and tissue donation. I was inspired by Grand Chief Beardy's spirit and commitment to the cause, as this issue is one that sits very close to his heart. Grand Chief Beardy and his wife, Nellie, tragically lost their son, Daniel, in 2004. At that time, they made the tough decision to donate Daniel's organs and tissues to give someone else a second chance at life. Grand Chief Beardy's ability to take a tragic loss and use his experience as a way to improve and benefit aboriginal communities across Ontario is truly inspiring, moving and no doubt a lesson to us all.

I encourage all Ontarians to register as donors. To do so, contact your local ServiceOntario health card services, OHIP office or outreach site where you renew your health card, or you can register online by downloading the gift of life consent form from [www.giftoflife.on.ca](http://www.giftoflife.on.ca).

I applaud Chief Beardy and the Nishnawbe Aski First Nation's commitment to enhancing the health and lives of not only First Nation communities but of all Ontarians.

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** Yet another eventful Black History Month has come to a close. Over the past month, many of our members and ministers have attended black history events and shown their support for Ontario's black community.

I'm proud to say that on February 3, I had the honour to attend the Royal Bank of Canada's celebration of Black History Month on behalf of our Premier, Dalton McGuinty, and our government. I was welcomed by the two hosts of the event, RBC regional president Jennifer Tory and regional vice-president Harriet Thornhill, and I presented the appropriate scroll from our Premier.

There was a warm welcome for the greetings I brought to RBC that evening. The hosts and their guests were very appreciative of our government's support at their Black History Month celebration. I stayed for the unveiling of a magnificent mural and performances that made the event a class act from beginning to end.

Thanks again to regional president Jennifer Tory for accepting our provincial scroll and assuring that it will remain a part of the Royal Bank's black history collection.

## HEALTH CARE

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** I rise in the House today in defence of the health care needs of the Burlington community. Residents of Burlington have been required,



through the Income Tax Act, to pay well over \$600 million into the provincial coffers for the McGuinty health tax. When I questioned the Minister of Health as to when Burlington residents could hope to receive long-awaited funding, the minister had the gall to proudly announce that \$17 million has already been invested in our community. Well, Minister, I hate to burst your bubble, but \$17 million received out of \$600 million invested is not a very good return for your money.

No one in the McGuinty government is left to speak for the people. Weighty long-term important decisions are being handed off to appointed individuals. The minister is shirking his responsibility for health care planning and allocation in my riding and in ridings across Ontario. Minister Caplan's government is incapable of operating an accountable and transparent administration for the benefit of the taxpayers of Ontario.

Burlington residents deserve an indication of when their substantial contribution through the health tax will be returned to them to renew and expand Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital.

#### FAMILY DAY

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** Last year, this government designated the third Monday of every February as Family Day. This was done in an effort to give Ontarians a break from their hard work and afford them an opportunity to spend time with loved ones. This year, on the second annual Family Day holiday, many residents in my riding of Oak Ridges–Markham did exactly that through participation in the joyous winter activity of ice skating.

I was pleased to sponsor a free Family Day community skate at the Stouffville Arena. More than 400 people from across the riding, myself included, laced up their skates for an afternoon of physical activity and family fun.

The two-hour-long skate saw His Worship Mayor Wayne Emerson and children and adults glide around the arena's ice surface and catch up with family and friends over a cup of hot chocolate and a snack.

I wish to thank the Stouffville Arena and everyone who participated in the Family Day skate. I was glad to have the opportunity to meet a number of my constituents there and enjoy an afternoon of fun with them. I hope this event provided families with a chance to enjoy each other's company and create lasting memories, and I eagerly await next year's Family Day skate.

#### RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ENERGY CONSERVATION

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I wanted to rise today and speak a little bit about Bill 150.

I just came through the ROMA and Ontario Good Roads Association conference, and I can tell you, I think this government is headed for the perfect storm as far as their plans for the economy of our province. With almost 300,000 lost manufacturing jobs—and apparently we're

looking at a deficit of \$10 billion to \$15 billion. Now to bring in the Green Energy Act on top of all this is having a very, very negative impact.

Just this morning, my office received about 35 calls on the audit alone. That's not going over very well with a number of people who have heard about it. On Thursday of this week, I have to meet with one of my municipalities that has already had a huge problem with a couple of proposals on wind generation on the shores of Georgian Bay.

Quite frankly, the people who have done their research into these projects on the shores of Georgian Bay—it has been inadequate. There has been a lot of opposition to the wind farm on the shores of Georgian Bay. The municipality and the residents are not very happy with any plan or proposal, but to come along and have legislation in place that would fast-track a project like a wind generation farm is really sending the wrong message to municipalities. It's not a way to partner with them.

I can tell you that if you're a farmer, if you're a business operator, if you're a tourism operator or if you're a marina, you follow the proper planning procedures. We would expect anybody, whether it was a wind generation farm or whether it was a solar farm, to do exactly the same thing.

As I say, I don't think it's a good move on the part of the province, especially when we are looking at some very, very difficult times, now to put in these dictatorial programs that would go against our municipalities is very unfortunate.

#### WILLIAM OSLER HEALTH CENTRE

**Mrs. Linda Jeffrey:** I rise in the House today to recognize the efforts of William Osler Health Centre. They became the first hospital in Ontario to successfully achieve an innovative and ambitious goal to hire 200 nurses in 200 days. This was the largest formal nursing recruitment program of its kind ever undertaken in a community hospital in Ontario.

This ambitious campaign began on May 27 of last year in response to the growing need for professional nursing staff. The hospital worked hard to reach its goal earlier than planned and it has now exceeded its target. At last count, 219 nurses have been hired.

Osler plans to continue its nursing recruitment efforts beyond this particular campaign. In fact, the recruitment for nurses is an ongoing priority for Osler's hospitals, where the need for nurses continues to grow, especially in emergency, intensive care and mental health.

At the same time that this campaign was under way, William Osler Health Centre was just one of a handful of hospitals in Ontario to be awarded the 2008 Healthy Hospitals Innovators Award from the Ontario Hospital Association. The award acknowledges hospitals that have demonstrated a commitment to creating and sustaining a healthy workplace through innovative occupational health and safety as well as human resources practices.



I would like to congratulate the hard-working employees of the William Osler Health Centre on having achieved these two important and momentous milestones.

1310

### COURT FACILITY

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** It is my pleasure to rise in the House today to announce details for the construction of a brand new courthouse in my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan. Located between Brodie and Archibald streets, this new facility is expected to be worth more than \$100 million and will consolidate the justice system for residents of northwestern Ontario.

I had the pleasure of hosting this announcement in Thunder Bay earlier in February with Ministers Smitherman and Bentley as well as my Thunder Bay counterpart, Minister Gravelle. I also want to recognize and thank Minister Caplan for his work on this file while he was the Minister of Infrastructure.

The new courthouse helps our community meet a 15- to 20-year request to modernize court facilities in Thunder Bay. It's important because one central location will mean better access to justice services, with more effective operations for police, prosecutors, judges and court staff. It will help streamline procedures in family, civil and criminal courts.

I'm also proud to say that it will be built according to the LEED silver standard, which is a set of guidelines for more energy-efficient, environmentally friendly construction.

This new infrastructure will have the added benefit of significant job creation as we hire local workers to build it. Just as important, it will become a catalyst for further downtown rejuvenation. There are going to be lots of people working in the new courthouse, and they will be increasing the need for more goods and services in the south core, so there's the potential for future development and expansion for our local businesses.

This is great news for our residents, and I look forward to sharing more good news with you in the very near future from my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan.

### WASTE DISPOSAL

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Today I would like to talk about garbage, a topic that has dominated the conversation of the good people of Estaire, an unorganized territory in my riding. The people in Estaire have been paying a user fee for bringing their garbage to Ministry of Natural Resources landfill sites through an MNR transfer station. Given the costs of operating transfer stations and landfill sites, and with the cuts to MNR, the ministry has decided to get out of waste disposal.

Local people approached me in May of last year, and together we have looked at every possible avenue for solutions: forming a local services board; forming a not-for-profit corporation for garbage; subcontracting the transfer station. And you know what? None of them can they afford. This is a \$100,000-a-year garbage disposal

problem which is being downloaded on the backs of 50 families. That's \$2,000 per household.

The deadline for closure was supposed to be last fall, then this February, and now the minister has agreed to an extension to the end of this month. We need a creative, innovative solution now, as time is running out. What do people do if there is nowhere to put their garbage, just when bears are waking up and looking for a snack? Not a good combination.

### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Ontario Liberals know that our quality of life depends on the health of our natural environment. That's why we have moved forward aggressively to make Ontario a leader on the environment.

Last year, the McGuinty Liberals acted so that Ontario families are able to enjoy a clean, safe environment. We are protecting the boreal forest. Ontario protected at least 225,000 square kilometres of the far north boreal region, and we are working together with our partners to map and permanently protect a network of conservation lands.

We are increasing waste diversion. There are new programs for household hazardous waste and electronic waste that will move us toward our goal of a zero-waste society.

We are protecting our kids from unnecessary risk. New legislation bans the use and sale of cosmetic pesticides and will eliminate the use of conventional pesticides for cosmetic purposes on lawns, gardens, schoolyards and parks, something that we tried in Ottawa many times, and we could not get the legislation passed.

We are protecting Lake Simcoe for future generations by calling for a plan that sets stricter environmental standards.

Ontario Liberals know that the environment is an issue that cuts across all areas of public policy. We will continue working and moving forward on the environment because there is much more to do.

### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

#### STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE POLICY

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Justice Policy and move its adoption.

**The Acting Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Anne Stokes):** Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:

Bill 108, An Act respecting apologies / *Projet de loi 108, Loi concernant la présentation d'excuses.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

*Report adopted.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS AMENDMENT ACT (ORGAN DONOR LEAVE), 2009 LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES NORMES D'EMPLOI (CONGÉ POUR DON D'ORGANE)

Mr. Fonseca moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 154, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 in respect of organ donor leave / Projet de loi 154, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi en ce qui concerne le congé pour don d'organe.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for a short statement.

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** Mr. Speaker, I'll make a statement during ministerial statements.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### ORGAN DONATION

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** I am pleased to introduce this legislation that would amend the Employment Standards Act to provide unpaid, job-protected leave for employees who donate certain organs to another individual.

This is good news, and I want to acknowledge the work and support that I've received from the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, David Caplan, and the staff at the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Job-protected leave for living organ donors would provide support for those compassionate Ontarians who are giving the gift of life to others.

Organ donation plays an important role in saving lives and improving the quality of lives of transplant recipients. The Ontario government is committed to boosting organ donations, and so provide a longer life and an improved quality of life to our fellow citizens.

At the present time, there are approximately 1,700 people on organ transplant waiting lists. These are our friends and neighbours, our mothers and fathers, and all too often our sons and daughters.

Organ donations save lives.

Living organ donors are an increasingly important source of organ donations, comprising approximately 30% of total transplants. In fiscal year 2007-08, out of 863 transplants that were completed, 260—or more than 30%—came from living donors.

The McGuinty government is committed to expanding organ donations in Ontario. We want to increase life-saving transplants and reduce wait times for patients on the organ transplant waiting lists.

If passed, this amendment would provide donors with up to 13 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave. The leave would be extended for another period of up to 13 weeks with a medical certificate confirming that the additional time is necessary because the donor is not able to perform their duties. This would give a total length of leave up to 26 weeks. The leave would apply to persons who are donating certain organs, such as livers and kidneys.

All employees covered by the Employment Standards Act would be entitled to the leave. Leave provisions would be enforced in non-unionized workplaces by the Ministry of Labour. In unionized workplaces, enforcement would generally be under the applicable collective agreement.

I would like to emphasize that the impact this legislation would have on the business community, or on any employer, is minimal. As I have noted, in fiscal year 2007-08, there were 260 transplants with donations coming from living donors. When employers were consulted, they supported job-protected leave for living organ donors. They did have some concerns. These included the need for reasonable notice prior to leave, that medical documentation to determine the length of leave was there and that the leave should be unpaid. We listened, and their concerns helped inform the development of this proposed bill.

1320

We have also responded to the Citizens Panel on Increasing Organ Donations, which was established in late 2006. This panel surveyed the public's views about organ donation and ways to improve and increase organ donation in Ontario. The panel heard extensively from living organ donors. None regretted donating an organ at all and they would do it again under the same circumstance. However, each and every one experienced hardships they had not anticipated when they were making the decision to donate.

The panel made numerous proposals to increase organ donation, including that the government enact legislation to guarantee job security for living organ donors. In August 2007, Premier McGuinty announced up to \$4 million to implement an organ donation strategy based on recommendations from that panel. As part of the organ donation strategy, the government launched the program for reimbursing expenses of living organ donors. This program established a fund to reimburse living organ donors for reasonable, actual, out-of-pocket expenses with their organ donation.

Our purpose was to remove potential barriers to organ donation and now I'm bringing forward amendments that would provide donors with job-protected leave while performing a selfless act. Living donation has many advantages such as reduced wait times, reduced patient suffering, increased transplant success and reduced health costs. Most importantly for the recipient, living donation is a lifesaver. The people of Ontario who recognize the value of each and every life and are willing to give of themselves to maintain that life deserve our support.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Responses?



## ORGAN DONATION

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I'd like to commend the minister on this bill. The intent of the bill is good. We all know that many people have languished long times on waiting lists for organ transplants, so I think the intent of the bill is good. As in any bill, the devil is in the details, so when we see that and have a chance to look it over and to debate that, with our caucus—my caucus hasn't had a chance to see it. It was my understanding that we were going to see the bill on Wednesday but it was today. We'll have an opportunity to look at it in caucus. I'd like to have the input of caucus and other members as to their impact on that.

Like I say, again, I think the intent of the bill is good. It's like any bill: It's well-intentioned, and we'd be hard-pressed—I'd be hard-pressed, anyway—to make an argument against that. I know many people in my family and my neighbourhood—and I worked with people when I worked in industry—who had family members or even themselves resort to some type of organ transplant or were on a waiting list. Anything that will relieve that for these families and to bring about a better quality of life for them, I would have no problem in supporting.

Just as an aside, I was thinking about that up-to-13-weeks-unpaid-leave that they would be eligible for. We had the temporary agencies bill introduced last week. Perhaps some of those people who replace those people would have to come from the temporary agencies. Anyway, on that, I would like to leave my remarks for later, after we've had have more chance to study the bill.

## ORGAN DONATION

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** New Democrats here at Queen's Park have been advocates for organ donation and radical reform for some good chunk of time now. Who wouldn't vote for the bill? But I dare say these diversionary, feel-good, fluff items that are being introduced don't serve the public well. The issue isn't unpaid leave for living donors. I would ask the minister at some point, perhaps, to identify a single worker in this province who was fired because she or he took time off from work to have a kidney or a piece of a liver cut out. Come on, now. This is silly. This isn't going to shorten the waiting list—adults and kids, 1,700 a year on waiting lists in this province—dying every day.

Most of us here—I dare say most of us—are old enough to remember when organ transplants were a mysterious, mystical thing. You'll remember Christian Barnard, the heart transplant doctor. That first patient lived a couple of days, and that was considered a miracle. The reality is that the technology for organ transplants in this province is state-of-the-art—it's mundane; it's routine. I dare say that I have a great deal of respect for a living donor. That is truly a gift.

I've got to give credit to George Marcello. You all know George Marcello. He's walked this country back and forth several times now, advocating for increases in access to organs. George Marcello was one of the people

who provoked the compensation of living donors for their out-of-pocket expenses, and we, of course, support that. What we need is a scheme where people have at least some modest income replacement during these 13 weeks.

The minister's own comments indicate that employers were consulted and they supported the job protection proposal. That suggests to me that the issue isn't whether or not those employers are going to fire somebody; the issue is compensation for lost wages.

We live in a regime that's called presumed denial. It is presumed that someone doesn't want their organs to be used when they die. That is an antiquated perspective. New Democrats have been talking about what Europeans have done. Israel, as far back as the early 1950s, said, "We, in a caring community, presume that our organs are going to be used." Why would anybody think to the contrary?

When I die, there's going to be a '94 Chev pickup down there on Bald Street, and the organs. Anybody who needs the pickup, come and get it. It has probably been better maintained than my organs. But if you want my organs, get them too. I'm going to the tattoo parlour and getting a dotted line on my belly that says, "Upon death, open here."

Kids are dying every day. Kids are walking around with pagers, living against hope that that pager might buzz. From time to time they get an inaccurate buzz. Do you understand the disappointment when it turns out to be a false alarm?

We have got to do what most of western Europe and, increasingly, eastern Europe have done. We've got to make it easier for doctors to rescue organs. Only if you sign off saying, "I don't want my organs to be used"—I don't know what kind of mean, selfish, miserable SOB would do that. There should be a sticker on the back window of their car saying, "I have no intention of letting anybody use my organs upon death." There isn't a single spiritual opposition to the prospect of organ donation. There's no faith that condemns it. In fact, all faiths support and advocate it.

I'm going to use this bill as an opportunity to talk about presumed consent, to talk about truly ending the waiting list. Every day, as we speak—today in this province—good organs are being burned and buried because, notwithstanding the millions of dollars in Don Cherry's and all the campaigns, and we know from polling that the vast majority of Ontarians want their organs to be used, people aren't signing the organ donor cards, or the organ donor cards aren't available in a timely way.

We New Democrats are going to use this to talk about presumed consent and about truly saving lives here in the province of Ontario and across this country.

SPECIAL REPORT, ENVIRONMENTAL  
COMMISSIONER OF ONTARIO

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I beg to inform the House that today I have laid upon the table a special report from the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario



entitled *The Last Line of Defence: A Review of Ontario's New Protections for Species at Risk*.

1330

## PETITIONS

### CHILD CARE

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** The petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services, Madeleine Meilleur, has decided that grandparents caring for their grandchildren no longer qualify for temporary care assistance; and

"Whereas the removal of the temporary care assistance could mean that children will be forced into foster care; and

"Whereas the temporary care assistance amounted to \$231 per month, much less than a foster family would receive to look after the same children if they were forced into foster care;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately reverse the decision to remove temporary care assistance for grandparents looking after their grandchildren."

I support this petition.

### PROFESSIONAL HOCKEY FRANCHISE

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I've got a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment has the highest average ticket revenue per game in the National Hockey League; and

"Whereas the Toronto Maple Leafs are ranked the most financially valuable team in the NHL; and

"Whereas many Hamilton and greater Toronto area hockey fans are unable to attend professional hockey games due to a lack of adequate ticket supply; and

"Whereas the Hamilton and greater Toronto area boast the biggest and best market in the world for hockey fans, with Maple Leafs Sports and Entertainment bringing approximately \$2.4 billion to the local economy over 10 years; and

"Whereas a new franchise in the Hamilton and greater Toronto area is valued at \$600 million by some economists; and

"Whereas competition in both business and sports is healthy for both the Hamilton and greater Toronto area economy and sports team performance; and

"Whereas, despite having the most loyal fans in the world, the Toronto Maple Leafs have not won the Stanley Cup in over 40 years; and

"Whereas Hamilton and greater Toronto area fans deserve competitive professional hockey teams;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Request that the government of ... Ontario express its strong support to the board of governors of the National Hockey League for the relocation or expansion of a second NHL hockey team in the Hamilton and greater Toronto area in order to realize the economic advantages to the taxpayers of the province of Ontario and to provide healthy competition to the existing Toronto NHL franchise."

I support this petition and will sign it.

### CHILD CUSTODY

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I have a petition from constituents in the riding of Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the people of Ontario, deserve and have the right to request an amendment to the Children's Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their parents and grandparents.

"Whereas subsection 20(2.1) requires parents and others with custody of children to refrain from unreasonably placing obstacles to personal relations between the children and their grandparents; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2) contains a list of matters that a court must consider when determining the best interests of a child. The bill amends that subsection to include a specific reference to the importance of maintaining emotional ties between children and grandparents; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2.1) requires a court that is considering custody of or access to a child to give effect to the principle that a child should have as much contact with each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2.2) requires a court that is considering custody of a child to take into consideration each applicant's willingness to facilitate as much contact between the child and each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child;

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Children's Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their parents and grandparents."

As I agree with this petition, I shall sign it and send it to the clerks' table.

### FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL POLICIES

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** I have received another petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the federal government gives more support for economic development, health care and infrastructure to other parts of Canada, and unemployed workers in Ontario get less employment insurance support than in other parts of Canada; and

"Whereas the federal system of taxes and equalization extracts over \$20 billion from the people of Ontario



every year above and beyond what Ottawa invests in Ontario; and

"Whereas laid-off workers in Ontario get \$4,630 less in employment insurance than they would get if they lived in another part of Canada; and

"Whereas federal health care money is supposed to be divided equally among all Canadians, but right now Ontario residents are shortchanged by \$773 million per year; and

"Whereas the federal government provides economic development support for people living in the north, Atlantic Canada, Quebec and the west, but provides no economic development support for southern Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to demand that the federal government stop gouging the people of Ontario and treat them fairly."

I concur with the petitioners, and I will affix my signature.

### ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I have a petition to do with power generation at Bala Falls. It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Bala Falls (north dam area), herein 'the site', is currently designated by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) as a suitable location for development of a hydroelectricity generation facility pursuant to applicable site release policies; and

"Whereas the geography and socio-economic conditions of Bala Falls make the site very valuable for its social, historic and tourism value; and

"Whereas the median family income in the district of Muskoka is arguably \$10,000 below the provincial median income; and

"Whereas construction of a powerhouse on the site is unreasonable as it would adversely affect the prosperity of the residents and other stakeholders of Bala by restricting services and access to the town during construction and may forever diminish the tourism value of Bala Falls for the district of Muskoka and the town of Bala; and

"Whereas construction of a powerhouse on the site would adversely affect the residents and other stakeholders of Bala by causing undue psychological stress resulting from disruption of life during the construction and resulting from the permanent destruction and loss of use and traditional enjoyment of the native shoreline vegetative buffer and natural rock formations at the site; and

"Whereas the MNR site release policies are poorly written and do not provide adequate public input and safeguards for protecting the best interests of the community and other stakeholders; and

"Whereas the MNR may have acted in bad faith when it authored its site release policies by unfairly targeting sites for release where the MNR wishes to offload its dam operations and maintenance obligations onto the private sector; and

"Whereas the MNR is not positioned properly to create policies that affect the provincial renewable energy strategy, or, in the alternate, failed to create workable policies that adequately prioritize the hydro generation potential of the province's lakes and rivers; and

"Whereas the selection of the site at Bala Falls and 18 other sites ahead of hundreds of other potential sites in Ontario may be inappropriately motivated by political gain on the part of the governing party; and

"Whereas the quantity of energy expected to be produced at Bala Falls under the current proposal is not sufficient to justify the adverse effects the current proposal will have on the community and other stakeholders;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario rescind the current provincial policies pertaining to the release of crown land for construction of new hydro generation facilities, and that members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario rescind the release of crown land at Bala Falls for use in the development of a hydroelectricity generation facility pending consideration of alternates that might achieve a better balance between the best interests of the community of Bala and the needs of society."

### PROPERTY TAXATION

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have a petition from the people of ward 3, of Evelyn Dutrisac, in the riding of Sudbury and Nickel Belt, as follows:

"Whereas 2009 is a reassessment year in the province of Ontario; and

"Whereas the assessments will be phased in over a four-year period from 2009 to 2012; and

"Whereas the assessed values for current value assessments collected as of January 1, 2008, were obtained during years of high real estate activity in the province of Ontario; and

"Whereas the downturn in the current global economic climate has greatly affected the real estate market, and subsequently, the assessed values in the province of Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of Finance for the province of Ontario roll back assessed values to the base year of January 1, 2005."

I fully support this petition. I will affix my name to it and send it to the Clerk's table with page Zaman.

### FIREARMS CONTROL

**Mr. Mike Colle:** This will be shorter.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there are a growing number of drive-by shootings and gun crimes in our communities;

"Whereas only police officers, military personnel and lawfully licensed persons are allowed to possess handguns;

"Whereas a growing number of illegal handguns are transported, smuggled and being found in cars driven in our communities;

"Whereas impounding cars and suspending driver's licences of persons possessing illegal guns on the spot by the police will make our communities safer;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 56, a bill entitled the Unlawful Firearms in Vehicles Act, 2008, into law so that we can reduce the number of drive-by shootings and gun crimes in our communities."

I support this petition, and I affix my name to it.

1340

#### FIREARMS CONTROL

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** I have yet another petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas innocent people are being victimized by the growing number of unlawful firearms in our communities; and

"Whereas police officers, military personnel and lawfully licensed persons are the only people allowed to possess firearms; and

"Whereas a growing number of unlawful firearms are transported, smuggled and found in motor vehicles; and

"Whereas impounding motor vehicles and suspending driver's licences of persons possessing unlawful firearms in motor vehicles would aid the police in their efforts to make our streets safer;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 56, entitled the Unlawful Firearms in Vehicles Act, 2008, into law, so that we can reduce the number of crimes involving firearms in our communities."

I do support it and I will affix my signature to it.

#### BATHURST HEIGHTS ADULT LEARNING CENTRE

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I have a petition from the good folks at Bathurst Heights:

"Whereas there are over 2,000 adult ESL students being served by the Bathurst Heights Adult Learning Centre, operated by the Toronto District School Board, in partnership with the province...;

"Whereas this is the only English as a second language (ESL) learning centre in this area ... located directly on the ... subway line...;

"Whereas newcomers in Toronto, and in the Lawrence Heights area, need the Bathurst Heights Adult Learning Centre so they can succeed in" job opportunities;

"Whereas the proposed revitalization of Lawrence Heights threatens the existence of the centre;

"Therefore we, the undersigned," request "that any revitalization of Lawrence Heights include a newcomer centre and ensure that the Bathurst Heights centre continues to exist in the present location."

I support this petition and I affix my name to it.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS AMENDMENT ACT (TEMPORARY HELP AGENCIES), 2009

##### LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES NORMES D'EMPLOI (AGENCES DE PLACEMENT TEMPORAIRE)

Resuming the debate adjourned on February 25, 2009, on the motion for second reading of Bill 139, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 in relation to temporary help agencies and certain other matters / Projet de loi 139, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi en ce qui concerne les agences de placement temporaire et certaines autres questions.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am appreciative of the opportunity to finish this last couple of minutes of my comments, which I started last week.

I want to continue by saying that the timing of this legislation is concerning. It's concerning both in terms of meddling with employers in a challenging economy and also how swiftly Mr. McGuinty wants to implement this bill. The implementation is to be a mere six months after the bill receives royal assent. That seems a little quick to me. I would say that the stakeholders have given this bill far more thought than the government, by the quality of their arguments. It's a true shame that the McGuinty government has chosen to waste this Legislature's time with non-urgent issues when our economy is in a tailspin.

I also have trouble reconciling the notion of penalizing employers at a time when our job market is in such distress, a peculiar and sad statement about the McGuinty government. Please note that the temporary agencies that are contracted by the provincial government are exempt from these new regulations. What is that about? It has been obvious to me and my colleagues for quite some time that there are rules for the McGuinty government and rules for the rest of us, but I have never seen it codified quite this way before. That is very unfair and it is sheer arrogance on the part of this government.

I thank the stakeholders who did their research on Bill 139 and provided such valuable feedback. I hope that the government takes their concerns to heart, as my caucus colleagues and I have, and that they will be making suggested changes to this bill because it is a challenged bill.

To the government and to Mr. Fonseca, I say: Back to the drawing board. This bill isn't even close to being ready. It is wasting precious time in our legislative agenda that should be dedicated to getting our economy back on track.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Questions and comments?



**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I'm going to be speaking to this bill further on behalf of New Democrats in just about eight minutes' time, and look forward to that opportunity.

I think in the discussion of the bill we'd better look at ourselves. This Legislative Assembly should do some housecleaning of its own, because the Legislative Assembly, of course, uses temp workers hired by temporary agencies. These workers are inevitably underpaid; they're not given the same rights as full staff of the Legislative Assembly. They work the same hours, some have worked for weeks and months, but this very Parliament uses temp agency workers who are being ripped off, scammed, not only by the temp agency, but by the Legislative Assembly itself. Shame on us. We indeed should be putting our own house in order and should be demonstrating leadership.

The other observation and reality, of course, is that as more and more jobs are lost here in the province of Ontario, working for anybody becomes increasingly a novelty. As unemployment skyrockets, working women and men are going to become increasingly desperate for any employment under any circumstances and under any conditions. They will be competing with each other and they will be underbidding each other for work. That's the kind of desperation that's developed in a provincial climate where our government has abandoned the workers of the province and where the government has abandoned any hope for those workers seeing their jobs maintained, never mind the prospect of them being restored.

This bill is not just about temp agencies per se; it's about the nature of a failing economy that this government has done nothing to address.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm pleased to have a chance to comment on the speech from the member for Burlington on Bill 139, which is the temporary help agencies bill put forward by the Minister of Labour. I would agree with the member for Burlington that the timing of this bill could, in fact, hurt employees versus helping them, and it could hurt businesses at a time when we're losing all kinds of jobs in the province of Ontario. We lost some 70,000 jobs last month. I don't think we should be rushing something through that could have a negative effect on those people who are currently employed through temporary agencies.

I note that under our labour law, severance is payable at three months, and there is a trending toward longer terms at temporary agencies, so this certainly becomes an issue. This government and this minister recently passed the WSIB bill that's going to be an additional cost on business as well. On that one, they're not implementing it for three years—I think, conveniently, after the next election, so I see maybe a little compromise and delay in bringing this one in. I certainly hope that there's going to be fulsome time spent at committee so that those people who have concerns with this bill will be able to voice their opinions and hopefully improve it, because the last thing we need at this time, when the economy is so weak,

is to bring forward legislation that's going to further hurt our competitiveness in this province of Ontario. So I hope they will take the time to make sure they listen to those people who work for, and those people in the business of, temporary agencies.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Questions and comments? The member for Burlington has two minutes to respond.

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** I want to thank the member for Welland for his comments and also the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka.

I agree that there are agencies that are managed by folks who are opportunists and who will take advantage of situations. There's no question that that's going on. But I really don't believe that they're in the huge majority; I really believe that most agencies are abiding by the law and are very much so law-abiding citizens and they follow the rules. They have successful businesses with folks who join these agencies as temporary workers by choice, not being forced to do this. For a lot of them, it suits their lifestyle, or this is their preference in how to seek employment. I think what we're doing here is going in with a sledgehammer to fix something that can be fixed far more easily and be focused on those folks who are not law-abiding and who do not follow the rules.

1350

I too hope, as does the member from Parry Sound—Muskoka, that this bill receives fulsome hearings, that there is an ability for people across our province to comment on this. I know I have received many such requests. There should be an opportunity given both to people who are working as temporary workers and the agencies they work for to be able to come and speak to the inadequacies of the way the bill is written so far. It is my hope that the government listens and that, by the time we are through with the hearings, the amendments are taken for what they are, good suggestions, and that we can move on and make this bill into something that we can all be proud of.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further debate.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** First, it's a delight to be able to speak to this bill because I know that page Olivia has her parents visiting today. It's always nice, and I know the other pages would hope they all get a chance to bring folks or kin here if at all possible.

Olivia, of course, and her folks are residents of the riding of Trinity—Spadina. That's Rosario Marchese's riding. I explained to Olivia how we have a tradition here that the page has lunch with his or her member during the time that they are here. We usually do it in the dining room downstairs. They haven't made an arrangement yet, Olivia told me.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** We have.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Oh, you have. What date is it, Rosie?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Just a couple of days ago.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** You did it a couple of days ago? Oh. You don't do it when the folks come, huh?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Well, I talked to them, because—you should have let me go.



**Mr. Peter Kormos:** You should have been here a couple of days ago. Your MPP would have bought you lunch.

I've just got to say this. Twenty-one years later, I never fail to be amazed by the quality of pages that we have here. It's just truly amazing. And over the course of that time, like with so many others here, you go to a university campus or some town somewhere in the province and someone will come up to you and tug on your sleeve and say, "Mr. Kormos, do you remember me?" Of course I don't, because you're in grades 7 and 8 when you're a page here, and then you are in university, you're a graduate. They remind me—

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** But you're still here.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Garfield Dunlop says I'm still here. I obviously haven't progressed the way these pages have. They're going to go on to pursue real careers. But it's truly fascinating. You have pages come up—they've done it with so many members here—tug your coat sleeve and say, "Remember me?" Of course, once they explain what year, which Premier, which Speaker—but the pages also, and you folks should know this, pick up more parliamentary procedure in their four and five weeks than more than a few members of the assembly have picked up in decades. They're just tremendous people. Olivia has been an absolute delight, and I hope her folks are very proud of her, as I'm sure all these young people's folks are.

We're talking about temp agencies. That means temp workers. That means people who don't have full-time permanent jobs in most cases, but for that, again, interesting little angle and spin on it here.

Talk about us getting our own House in order. You know, Speaker, don't you? We have people working in this building who are hired through temp agencies. You know they receive but a fraction of the wage earned by their co-workers who are full-time employees of the assembly. You know that, don't you, Speaker? They do the very same work, and they're not filling in for a couple of weeks while another worker is off on sick leave or maternity leave. They are working here for weeks and months at a time. I've met them; I've talked to them. We've got a human resources department, for Pete's sake. Why are we hiring workers through a temp agency? Can the Minister of Labour ever justify that? I don't blame him, because it's not within his bailiwick.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Talk to the Speaker, will you?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I am speaking to the Speaker. We've got a human resources department, fully staffed. Why we're hiring temp workers who are being paid a fraction of what their co-workers are making just boggles the mind, which brings me to Eurest, the private contractor running our food services downstairs.

I remember, just like you do, Speaker, when the Conservative government dismantled the staffing of that cafeteria and restaurant downstairs. I want to make it very clear that, unlike many rumours and unlike the reality in some other Parliaments, that food service downstairs was never subsidized by the taxpayer. Even when the staff

there worked directly for the Legislative Assembly, we—and it's not as if we couldn't afford it—paid whatever it cost to produce the food and pay the workers there. The Conservative government dismantled that and contracted out the service. And you'll recall as well—because I recall sitting with them right up there—those workers, some of whom had worked for 15, 20 and 25 years, most of whom were women, most of whom were new Canadians, were told they could keep their jobs, but at a fraction of the wage that they had been paid.

Now I'm told by some of those same workers downstairs that they're having hours cut back and that Eurest is hiring part-time staff. We know their wages are deplorable. Again, I don't mind paying an extra quarter or 50 cents or whatever it is the most recent price increases were for a bowl of soup or a sandwich, but I sure as heck expect those workers to get a piece of that.

We'd better take care of our own house first and get our own house in order. I think that would be a subject matter for BOIE, Board of Internal Economy.

For the life of me, I can't see why we're letting a contract out to a private company that won't commit to full disclosure of things like wages, that won't commit to a pattern of wage increases when there are price increases, and that won't commit to maintaining full-time jobs for hard-working people.

Look, all of us go downstairs to that cafeteria, and the staff are just stellar, aren't they? They treat us with such respect, with such warmth and with such politeness. They work as hard as anybody could ever work, and in the food service industry that means working pretty hard, on your feet all your shift.

It seems to me that we, as a Parliament, should ensure that workers in this building, whether they're working for the Legislative Assembly through a temp agency or whether they're working for a contract servicer, a contract provider, like our food services—oh, yes, it was the Conservatives that contracted it out, but it was the Liberals who, after five years, have done nothing about bringing it back in to a Legislative Assembly service.

You know full well food ain't cheap down there. It's not as if somehow we're getting discount food—and we don't deserve discount food; everybody here makes a pretty good wage, a pretty good salary. I'm talking about in the chamber, not necessarily the people who work for us. I am not whinging. Did you get that word, Speaker? Whinging. I'm not whinging about the prices, but I am whinging about the fact that those workers are very much part of that class of workers who are being treated as second-class workers.

As the economy gets harder, it's going to become more and more frequent. My colleague Mr. Marchese and I were just talking during petitions about how when you have these kinds of tough economic climates, this is where labour relations suffer. You know why? Because in a tough economic climate like this, with huge levels of unemployment, it's easier to generate busloads of scabs.

Even good people, when they're afraid of losing their houses, start reflecting on the prospect—people who



would never in a million years ever think of scabbing or crossing a picket line. Even good people in tough, tough times—oh, and I'll never countenance scabbing. You've heard me quote Jack London's definition of it, and I don't want to have to do that again. We'll wait a couple more rounds before I repeat that. Scabbing, of course, is one of those dangerous things to labour relations, because it means that there's no incentive on management to settle. You get people underbidding each other for the same work. It becomes easier and easier to force people to work for less and less.

Cheri DiNovo, our member from Parkdale–High Park, has advocated for effective, meaningful reform of the temp agencies for a long time—since her election here.

Look, we're going to support this bill on second reading. It has got to get into committee, because there's a whole lot of work that remains to be done, as has already been noted by Ms. Savoline, amongst others.

1400

We are particularly concerned about the exclusion of, amongst others, home care workers—section 74.2—the contract services that are provided by CCACs. We already saw the vicious attack on CCACs with the competitive bidding model. Victorian Order of Nurses, Red Cross—who else, Mr. Marchese? You recall the lengthy list—done in. Mrs. Caplan, the former Peterson minister, was called upon to investigate the matter and to report back. She maintained that the competitive bidding model was the best possible model, when we know full well it isn't. So we have serious concerns about section 74.2, and we question the purported premise of the government in that regard.

It is imperative that the committee hearings focus on, amongst other things, the exemption of home care workers, something that the SEIU, CUPE, OPSEU, ONA and others are adamant about. They need an opportunity to talk about the people they represent. In those very difficult working conditions, why they would be exempt just boggles the mind. It beats me. I can't for the life of me figure out any honest reason for exempting them.

Again, these are people who work hard, especially in the contract services area and in the temp agencies area, where they're earning a fraction of what their peers are earning—and in home care, where they're travelling to several homes possibly in one day, dealing with a high-needs Alzheimer's person in the morning, dealing with another person in the afternoon, dealing with people who are in any number of physical and mental health conditions, and doing it knowing full well that they aren't being given enough hours with each client to do justice to that client.

You know these home care workers too. They go the extra mile. They're the ones who bring little gifts to people whose homes they attend. They're the ones who stay a little longer if it's the end of the day or the end of the shift and they can get away with it with a particular client, even though they know that the agency isn't going to pay them for it.

Any of us who have or have had aging parents who have been fortunate enough to get a few hours of home

care a week know who these people are: some of the hardest-working people, some of the most professional people in our community; people who are being called upon to do jobs that many of us not only couldn't do but wouldn't do—and they're exempted.

The issue really isn't just temp agencies; the issue is the Employment Standards Act.

I like the minister. The minister is an ambitious and hard-working member of this Legislature. I have no hesitation in saying that. The problem is, the minister doesn't call the shots; the Premier's office does. We know that. You can attend all the cabinet meetings you want and it ain't worth spit, because it's vetted by the brain trust in the Premier's office.

You know that yourself, Speaker. There's a member of this Legislature who has produced a very, very important piece of legislation that deals with fire alarm systems—well, not the alarms, but the water systems. Everybody supports it. It could be phased in with new home construction, it could be phased in in any number of ways, to control or contain the supposed costs argument. Notwithstanding that member's best efforts—and she's a hard-working member too—if the Premier's office don't give it the nod, it simply don't happen, which is why when people call me about those types of efforts, on this particular bill, this water system, I say, "Look, call me if you like. Don't blame the member. But I'll tell you what: Here's Dalton McGuinty's office number. Lean on him, because that's how it's going to happen."

What we need is a thorough overhaul. This is why I speak in such complimentary tones of the minister, because I am buttering him up for what we really would dearly love to see and what he could have as a legacy piece of legislation, and that would be a major overhaul of the Employment Standards Act, all-encompassing, instead of little bits and pieces, an Employment Standards Act that applied to every worker in this province. Because one of the concerns with the temp agencies act is the increasing trend to treat workers and employees as contract persons. That way, you get them in under the radar and you have them work for less than minimum wage, because, of course, they are contractors. A whole lot of home workers, people in the needle trades—Rosario Marchese is very familiar with that group of workers. They're a big chunk of his constituency: people, usually women, who sew garments at home. You see, they are contractors, so they are not entitled to any Employment Standards Act legislation. They end up working for \$2 and \$3 an hour. And they work hard. They work darned hard, sewing designer labels into high-end couture so the Bloor Street carriage trade, Yorkville crowd can show up on the lifestyle/social pages of the Toronto Sun or the Toronto Star on the weekend at their opera house opening or at their charity ball, while some woman sat in a basement apartment sewing that garment for a couple of bucks an hour.

Please. How can we talk about temp agencies and regulating them and protecting the interests of workers



who are employed through temp agencies without talking about the minimum wage? It's always, "Oh, not now. Now is not a good time." You see, the problem is that minimum wage workers didn't receive a single increase in minimum wage for 10 years plus. So I appear on one of these talking-head shows with the CFIB, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, Catherine Swift et al.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I like her.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Garfield Dunlop likes her. He would. She is on the far right wing. She doesn't want workers to get increases in minimum wage either.

So I appear on these talking-head shows, and the CFIB types, many of whom I like except that they are so right-wing, say, "Well, you know, now is not a good time because employers can't afford to pay more." But, you see, I have to point out that workers were subsidizing the employer for 10 years plus, weren't they? They don't have a response to that. Think about it. Minimum wage workers who didn't receive a penny increase for over 10 years—in that instance, it was literally like paying money out of their own pocket to their bosses. Now it's time to pay the piper. It's time to catch up.

That's why New Democrats are adamant that the minimum wage, right now, right today, should be \$10.25 an hour. And we know—because, you see, the vast majority of employers of hard minimum wage workers are not small business people. Most small business people pay a dollar or two dollars above the minimum wage. We're talking about family businesses, for instance. The vast majority of minimum wage workers, for whom they live to the letter of the law and not a penny more, are the Tim Hortons and the McDonald's of the world, the big chains, the ones who can most afford to pay a decent wage—still not a living wage—to workers who haven't received a penny increase in 12 years. Twelve years they went without a penny increase.

And every penny of that minimum wage earned by that minimum wage worker is spent. They weren't out buying RRSPs today, let me tell you. They don't stash their money in offshore bank accounts. They don't take vacations in Nassau in the Bahamas. They don't cross-border shop. They spend every penny in their own communities, usually in their own neighbourhoods, usually in those same small businesses that we're talking about. What better way to provide some local economic boost than to increase the minimum wage to \$10.25 an hour?

1410

So I tell you, we're going to vote for this with some real hesitation, because we think it's imperative that this get into committee. Those committee hearings should be broad based. They should travel the province because—how many times have I got to say it?—reality for the folks up in Attawapiskat and Peawanuck is light years away from the reality for people in southern Ontario. I say that that committee, if it's serious about seeing the impact of this legislation and the legislation's failures, should be ensuring that every Ontarian, regardless of how small the town is that they live in, how far north they

live, how remote they live, has an opportunity to have their views heard and, more importantly, considered.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's a pleasure to see you in the chair.

I wanted to enter the debate today. My colleague and I don't often see eye to eye on public policy, though we are quite collegial. I just wanted to say this is the second bill today that has been introduced in reading, or I guess this is a bill that is being debated, from the Minister of Labour. It's also the second bill today that we've discussed because there was first reading of another bill. I was sitting in the gallery while he was making his remarks about organ donation, and while we may not see eye to eye on this piece of legislation, I certainly listened with great interest in and support of his comments with respect to organ donation and the real issue in terms of making sure that we encourage as many people as possible to donate their organs and make that as easy as possible, so I appreciate that.

I'll be up to speak in a few minutes about my opposition to this piece of legislation and some of the circumstances that we're facing here in the province of Ontario and some of these bills. As my good colleague from Welland notes, this is another piece of legislation that is introduced to distract us from the challenges we're facing in the economy. Rather than us working hard together to get us out of some economic strife, the Premier's office has mandated this piece of legislation to divert our attention from some of the real challenges this province is facing.

I just want to conclude in again saying that I fully support my colleague from Welland and his views on organ donation and I appreciate all of the work that he has done over the years to make that issue an important one that many of us need to address in this province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey):** Further comments?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I want to congratulate my colleague on the comments he has made for those men and women who work in precarious working conditions, because they do need many of us to defend the work they do. The member for Welland reminds us that 37%—maybe he mentioned it or didn't—of all workers are part-time, temporary workers or others who classify themselves as independent workers. It's a large, large figure.

The reason why that is true is because all employers are looking for cheap labour. It's about paying them the prices you don't want to pay your full-time employees. It's about making sure that those people are working in substandard conditions. He mentions the fact that even in this Legislature, we hire people on a part-time basis and pay them so very little. He talked about the foodservices and some of the problems we have there.

I remind the government and those listening that half of our college teachers are part-time. It's cheap labour and the government condones it. The reason why community colleges are hiring on a part-time basis is because



they don't have the support from the government to be able to hire full-time professors. Some 20% to 25% of our university professors are part-time. That's why they went on strike at York University for a long, long time.

We condone it. We think it's okay because we don't want to pay workers adequate wages. That's what this is about. Some people think it's okay. If you're an employer and you hire people cheaply, that's okay. But those workers need a voice when they don't have the benefits, when they don't have the support, when they get laid off, when they're fired without any reason. These are the things that we will be speaking to again.

Thank you, member for Welland—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey):** Questions and comments?

The member for Welland has two minutes to summarize.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I appreciate the generosity of my colleagues in their comments. It's Monday. I always look forward to Mondays, for that very reason. By Tuesday and Wednesday, the climate changes considerably and they're less inclined to be as generous. I perhaps attract that, or am as much the cause of it as anything.

Public hearings: I encourage people to start getting a hold of the clerk's office, indicating—if this bill goes to a vote today or in the next few days, we will be saying no to third reading so that it has to go to committee. I think the minister intends for it to go to committee in any event. We need broad-based hearings. That's been referred to by the Conservatives, when Mrs. Savoline spoke, and I've underscored it. I suspect that Mr. Marchese is going to be speaking to it and I suspect he'll reinforce that as well.

We're talking about, in many cases, people who are hidden away, a class of invisible people, because they're the people who, as temp workers—not always. They're the people who clean hotel rooms; they're the people who do the work in the middle of the night. They're the people who work in the basements and in the backroom, not in the front of the business or in the restaurant—not always, but as often as not.

Unions like UNITE HERE have worked very, very hard trying to give these people a voice. Of course, without card-based certification, it's very hard for these people to organize into a union. The government doesn't think card-based certification is good enough for these folks, either—good enough for the building trades, but not good enough for the poorest workers and the hardest-hit workers.

We've got to have those full hearings and they've got to travel about Ontario or else this government will have displayed thoroughly genuine insincerity in its approach to this important matter.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey):** Further debate?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I appreciate the opportunity to join debate today on Bill 139, legislation that will amend the Employment Standards Act.

Let me say at the outset that I think this piece of legislation goes along with several others of its kind

which do not address the real needs of our economy. It has essentially been introduced to fill up time in this chamber and I will not be supporting it. I don't think it looks at the economy as a whole and how we can better provide, in this chamber, a better economic climate.

This is the same ministry that in the last year has imposed an \$11,000 tax on small business. They have rapidly increased the minimum wage so that businesses in my community are speaking out and saying that they may have to lay people off because they will not be able to afford their labour.

Earlier today, this minister announced another piece of legislation to which, in the coming days, this party and I'm sure the New Democrats will provide sober second thought, and of course now, this bill.

We have several concerns. I don't have to tell anyone in this chamber about the sad state of our economy. The situation we are in, yes, has been dealt with by economies worldwide, including in other parts of this country. But that does not mean that the McGuinty Liberals can just abdicate their authority in this chamber by producing one-off bills that in the larger economic landscape do nothing for the taxpayers, the residents and the workers of this province.

We have a number of concerns, in the official opposition, with this legislation, including the cost to Ontario businesses and the subsequent job losses that this piece of legislation could cause. As you know, in the month of January alone, the people of this province grappled with the fact that 71,000 of our friends, family and neighbours lost their jobs. They lost their entire income. These are people, we must remember, who are paying mortgages; they are trying to put food on the table for their children; they are trying to put other kids through university. This is a real challenge, and the bill in its current form can actually do the opposite of its original intent. It could scare businesses away from hiring temporary employees because it may make it more expensive to do so. We can't have these agencies fold when so many Ontarians are relying on a second chance. As I mentioned, the McGuinty Liberals have already dealt a few serious blows to small businesses through the Ministry of Labour in the last year.

1420

I like to join the debate when I know that legislation will directly impact my residents. I like to bring their views to the floor, as I'm sure all of my colleagues like to do as well. I received a letter from Comfort Keepers: Comforting Solutions for In-Home Care, in my constituency in Nepean—Carleton. My constituents write me a letter: "I am writing to implore you to oppose Bill 139, 'An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 in relation to temporary help agencies and certain other matters' which is currently before" the Ontario provincial Parliament.

The letter goes on to say: "We believe that the proposed amendments are based on the experiences made with a number of unscrupulous temporary employment agencies which have made a living by taking advantage



of their untrained, unsupervised workers (and to some degree their clients). By contrast, our company's philosophy is to conduct ourselves in an ethical and professional manner and, more importantly, give our staff the kind of flexible work they are seeking, be that daytime, evening, or holidays: in other words, schedules which meet their needs while, at the same time, meeting the needs of our clients/patients.

"The following are important considerations," Comfort Keepers goes on to say:

"1. These changes will add further costs and burden to small businesses such as ours, which ultimately will need to be reflected in the pricing to our clients who are seniors, often on fixed incomes, and who may well no longer be able to afford our services.

"2. We are serving an important segment of our society: seniors who would prefer to age at home and who have found reliable, trustworthy and cost-effective ways of getting" the help they need.

"3. If seniors migrate toward public alternatives, this will put tremendous pressure on the government's ability to provide home care and accept residents to long-term-care facilities...."

I'm just going to deviate from this particular bill for one minute to make my point. In the city of Ottawa—and I've got a few colleagues here from Ottawa—we know that we have significant pressures on our long-term-care facilities as well as our hospitals. It's not a secret; it's been mentioned several times in the newspaper and I'm sure, as many of my colleagues who have talked to our CEOs and the presidents of our hospitals know, it's a real challenge. What we need in the city of Ottawa and we need probably right across the province is an integrated approach which not only builds more capacity in our long-term-care facilities but also helps seniors live independently longer.

When you read this letter from Comfort Keepers, they're talking about how they are able to work through the current system that we have and are keeping more seniors at home rather than in nursing homes and helping us with our long-term-care deficit; it's really important that we take into consideration the views that I've just put on the table from Comfort Keepers. I implore the minister, who I'm pleased to see here in this debate, to take these concerns into consideration as this bill goes to committee.

One of the things that has disappointed me is that through this debate the Liberals haven't been participating. They've skipped their rotation, not only in debate when the NDP or the Conservatives were using their allotted time, but then they also skipped their rotation when it was their turn to debate. I can't imagine that I am the only member of this Legislature or that Conservatives and New Democrats are the only members and caucuses in this Legislature who are getting feedback from this legislation. There are some real concerns here.

I'd like to move on. Another group approached our caucus with some of their concerns with this legislation. I'm happy that the minister is here to listen to this,

because there is a real concern with the removal of the "elect to work status" and how it will affect notice of termination.

The constituent writes, "This cost burden will make it impossible for clients to continue to use agencies which they have come to depend on to remain competitive in a global economy. The use of temporary workers helps them manage peak periods and fluctuations."

Granted, all of those stakeholders who oppose this bill know the bill is going forward. They know, in essence, that they've lost the game. But I think what we're trying to do in this chamber, and what I hope the minister will take away from this, is express the concerns that these stakeholders have and maybe find a way we can improve the legislation so that there will not be a negative economic impact on small and medium-sized businesses across the province of Ontario.

I remind the chamber that this is a period of time that we have not seen in many years. We are in a serious recession. People are losing their jobs daily in this province. We must not put more obstacles in the way of those who are employing Ontario's workers.

This constituent goes on to say: "This will remove the flexibility that many organizations have come to require in this global economy with goods arriving from various ports. Many of these organizations will leave this province if that flexibility is lost and move to a more business-friendly environment. With what is occurring in the US they will continue to receive an even greater incentive to do so.

"Numerous large organizations have temporary workers as part of their business plan, including many with unionized environments.

"Those organizations that do not move will ultimately be forced to consistently turn over its workforce in an effort to minimize such impact. This will force all parties to immediately turn over the staff prior to three months of employment to avoid the issue altogether."

I think the minister would have to agree that that is a serious concern.

We are also told, "How can such a policy truly benefit a worker that is trying to develop the skills to gain better full-time employment, when they are displaced every 10 weeks?"

Let's go back to the example of those offering home health care. As we know, seniors who are aging would prefer to have someone they are familiar with, comfortable with and who they trust looking after them. I don't think there is any benefit in seeing a 10-week turnover in that type of environment, where in some cases end-of-life care is what these temporary workers are giving.

There's also a concern that many of these workers are new Canadians with good work ethic and skills but lacking the communication skills clients would require for them to obtain full-time employment. Working temporary assignments as a starting point provides them with an opportunity to contribute, pay taxes and feel proud of themselves.



1430

This comes from one of my colleague Peter Shurman's constituents—it's a direct quote—who actually owns a temporary agency. He lists several more points, including statutory holiday pay becoming mandatory effective June 2, 2009:

"Our agency has paid statutory holiday pay to a percentage of our workforce based on attendance, longevity, etc. so we will be able to digest such a notion. However, the cumulative effect of this with the other proposed changes will be economically devastating to our industry and to our clients."

The Association of Canadian Search, Employment and Staffing Services, ACSESS, executive summary says, "There are three technical shortcomings within the bill which require improvement; otherwise, these areas will cause an overall failure to achieve the stated objectives. These shortcomings unintentionally create an overly complex set of rules that are administratively unmanageable for any employer and may be impossible to monitor and enforce. These shortcomings will also unintentionally cost thousands of jobs and cause significant hardship for the people the bill was specifically designed to protect." Again: "These shortcomings will also unintentionally cost thousands of jobs and cause significant hardship for the people the bill was specifically designed to protect." That is such an important and relevant point to make when debating Bill 139, the Employment Standards Amendment Act (Temporary Help Agencies).

The minister ought to be concerned about that. I don't have to remind him that in the last year, the province of Ontario has seen hundreds of thousands of jobs disappear. We've seen our economic growth in this country go from first to worst. We've actually become a have-not province, though we were once the economic engine of Canada, and we've seen a limited but patchwork response from this government in actually dealing with some of the greatest challenges our economy has faced. We deserve better as a province.

This bill needs to go to committee. It needs to see some of the necessary amendments passed. I would urge the members opposite in the government to understand that to fix the state of our economy requires more than just one-off pieces of legislation, whether it's the minimum wage, whether it's the Green Energy Act, whether it is this piece of legislation or it's the WSIB legislation. The fact remains: Our economy is at its weakest. We need real help for the real people who are suffering.

That's why I will not support this bill: because I do not believe it addresses the challenges which we are facing right across Ontario and which deserve and require serious debate in this Legislature. It requires a budget to be tabled almost immediately, and we've only seen delay and dithering on that front.

Madam Speaker, again I would like to thank you for the opportunity to debate. I do hope that this debate will continue and that we will see members of the government actually participate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey):** Comments and questions?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I say to the member for Nepean—Carleton, Ms. MacLeod: Don't hold your breath. Clearly this is a far more controversial bit of legislation than the brain trust in the Premier's office had planned it to be. New Democrats have concerns about the bill—not the same concerns as the Conservatives do, but all that this indicates is that there have to be full committee hearings, that this somehow can't be short-circuited and rushed through committee with, oh, a dozen or so hand-picked presenters.

I'm prepared to sit down and hear what the temp agencies have to say. I'm not afraid of what they say. I'm prepared to—more important, in my view—sit down and hear what the workers have to say.

I know that Ms. DiNovo will be following this bill carefully as it progresses through the process. Mr. Marchese, the member for Trinity-Spadina, is going to be speaking to the bill for the modest 20 minutes allowed him, not because he's Mr. Marchese, but because that's what the rules here say, that you can only speak for a maximum of 20 minutes, unless you're doing the lead. I know he's got a lot to say. I'm looking forward to hearing the member for Trinity-Spadina, because I know there are a whole lot of people in his riding who are directly affected by this legislation, just as there are, dare I say, in every riding in this province.

Full committee hearings, broad-based, travelling across the province, because what happens—you see, governments don't come back to this sort of legislation year after year. It's going to be 10 years, 15 years before this issue is ever addressed again. Let's try to get it as right as we can this time around.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey):** Comments or questions?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'm pleased to rise today to speak to the member from Nepean—Carleton's comments on this temp agencies bill.

I think one of the things I got out of her message was that it's important that we debate this type of legislation, but here we are talking about temporary agency types of jobs. I understand it should go to committee. We'll have to get out and do our job as parliamentarians and make sure we get the bill right, and there are obviously conflicting views on it.

My worry here today, though, is, every time I open the paper I'm basically seeing another manufacturing plant or small businesses losing tens of thousands of jobs per week now. We have a crisis here.

One of the things that's really disturbing me is that we're leaving our provincial budget so late. I thought that we had to have our travelling road show, our Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, all done so that we could have an early budget. We had meetings prior to Christmas, which was a change, with the understanding that we were coming back here to have a budget presented immediately, that would sort of parallel what was happening in Ottawa. Now we're hearing it's not going to happen for another month—yes, another month this week—and I don't think that's acceptable to the



business people and to the citizens of the province of Ontario who have witnessed some 300,000 lost manufacturing jobs in a world economic crisis.

I'd like to be debating the budget here today. That's what I'd like to be debating. Let's get this temporary agencies bill out of the way. We'll make sure we get it right and get it to hearings, but the reality is, we need to be spending a lot more time on the \$90 billion or the \$100 billion it takes to run this province and where the money is going to come from and how we can save those jobs here in the province of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey):** Comments or questions?

I return it to the member from Nepean—Carleton.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I appreciate the comments from my colleagues from Welland and Simcoe—Grey—

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** North.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Simcoe North; I apologize. My colleague from Simcoe North made, I think, the best point of the day. We should be debating the budget, the budget that will come out 25 days from now, or 22 days from now, or 23 days from now, whenever it is—it's March 26, and it's far too long.

Again, he makes the point that committee hearings for the finance committee were rushed out the door before Christmas, supposedly so that they would have recommendations for the finance minister and we could have an early budget. Well, "early" means late with the Liberals. I'm just very concerned with this legislation. He makes a valid point. We should actually be debating a bill that speaks more to the economy than just one-offs.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey):** Further debate?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I'm a New Democrat who's happy to be debating this bill. I'm always pleased when, as New Democrats, we're able to push the Liberals to do something that can at least be classified as progressive. It takes a long while to push Liberals, you understand, and it takes a whole lot of pushing and a whole lot of political pressure to get them to do some things. Eventually they deliver on some modest bills like this one, including Bill 150, which I will speak to either today or another day.

1440

It's always a pleasure to be able to comment on these things. When we look at some aspects of the bill, where they talk about ending fees charged to workers by temporary assignment agencies, do I agree with that? Yeah, I think it's a good idea. Reducing barriers to permanent work for temporary agency workers—okay, it's a good idea. Whatever barriers we can reduce to permanent workers is good. I'm not quite sure how successfully that particular aspect of the bill is going to work, but who could disagree with that?

Ensuring public holiday pay for all temp agency workers, whether on assignment or laid off from assignment—I think that's a good idea. People should be entitled to benefits such as ensuring public holiday pay. Requiring agencies to give workers information about assignments and basic rights sounds basic to me. It's hardly radical—

pretty basic stuff. Ensuring that temp agency workers will get some termination and severance protection—I kind of think it's a good idea.

Requiring that both the agency and the client company are legally responsible when a worker is penalized for trying to enforce his rights—these things are okay. Again, they're not radical, but they're okay and they're moving in the right direction. That's why I say that, as is typical of Liberal bills, they move you in that direction, and it's sometimes very difficult for New Democrats to defeat them because, in and of themselves, they're good to do. It should be doing so much more, and it never will. It will take them yet another term, should they be re-elected, to make some more progressive changes to the Employment Standards Act or the Ontario Labour Relations Act, and they will make those changes only if New Democrats are pushing and only if the Toronto Star has an editorial from time to time saying to the Liberals what they should do. When that happens, it's good.

I'm happy that the Liberals listen to the Toronto Star editorials, because when the Toronto Star beats them up, they have no option but to find a way to deliver. Now, they never deliver completely, but that's okay. The Toronto Star will say, "That's a good as a first step," and they'll buy peace for a couple of years until the Toronto Star decides, "Maybe we can push them a little more." So we're lucky. From time to time we're able to get the Toronto Star to help New Democrats as well, so that we can eventually encourage Liberals to do the right thing.

But it comes with pushing. It comes with a whole lot of political pressure. When I think of the 37% of workers who are part-time, temporary or contract workers, that's a whole lot of people who live and work in precarious conditions. Sometimes I think many MPPs live such sheltered lives that they don't know too many people who live in temporary and part-time employment—precarious work environments. My sense is that sometimes some of those here in this Legislature, both on the right and in the middle, don't know too many of those workers. I get that impression. We're so cozy in our own homes that we don't worry about whether people are getting an adequate wage to have a modicum of the standard of living we enjoy.

I think about that from time to time. I think about how this government could allow community colleges to hire part-time staff, who constitute half of college teachers, and think that's okay. How could Liberals believe that's good for the quality of education of those students when you've got part-time workers, some of them doing two jobs, which is usually the norm, and that that makes a good contribution to the quality of education of the students in those colleges? It cannot be good. It's cheap labour; that's what it's about. The Liberals would never say that, but that's what it is: cheap labour. And it deals with the fact that governments are not providing the support to those community colleges and, as such, community colleges have had to hire part-time college professors for many, many years, and it was getting worse. It is getting worse, was getting worse until the time when



OPSEU, many college professors and others said, "They need to have the power to organize, to bargain." That took a long time. That didn't come easily. The Liberals were not quite happy to give them that right, and, of course, that's typical of Liberals. They give one right and then make sure they take away three, making it difficult for New Democrats to oppose the bill, because it allows them to unionize while taking other rights away. How do you oppose one without getting caught in facing another problem? But that's what Liberals do.

University professors: 20% to 25% of the university professors are part-time. It's the same problemo. They don't have any money. They've been underfunded for so long that governments, and in this particular instance a Liberal government, have been quite happy for universities to be able to hire on a part-time basis.

I just asked a question of the minister today, where we've discovered that universities have a \$2.6-billion deficit and each university, on average, is in debt to the tune of \$150 million—big dollars; big, big problems in our university system. We have the largest class sizes in Canada, and the government feels happy about that.

Each and every day, the minister gets up and says, "We're doing great; we're doing really good." He says that every day. Every time I ask him a question, he's saying, "It's great"—the largest class sizes in the country. We are numéro 10 in the country in terms of per capita funding. The minister stands up and says, "No, we're doing good; we're doing great." He says that every day. Every day we ask the minister questions about the quality of our education system, about student debt, and every day he stands up saying, "No, things are good."

But we need to worry about people who work in precarious employment, because these are human beings who are working for modest wages, desperately trying to gain enough dollars to pay their rent and feed themselves and their kids. They can't even provide for basic necessities. We have a rise in food banks unlike we've ever seen before. We saw a rise under Mike Harris; we see a rise in food bank use under the Liberals that we've never seen before. Yet the government boasts about how great they have been in managing that economy under Harris before and now under McGuinty. For years they've been boasting about how great the economy was and how great people are doing, and here we have the highest use of food banks that we've ever seen. Imagine how bad it's going to be in the next year. If you think the Bob Rae years were bad, wait until the McGuinty years come in the next year and a half. It's going to be pretty tough. You might have McGuinty join the NDP after this stint of bad economic problems.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** They wouldn't take him. Sure-ly, Rosie, you wouldn't take him, would you?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** We don't get too many. We lose a few, but we don't get too many. This is true.

The economy is in a shambles and it's tough for working men and women. Our economy is not served well when we pay people poorly. You've got MPPs arguing that you have a whole lot of businessmen and women

who are struggling, and never a word about the poor people who work for them for minimum wage or less and are afraid to speak up, never talk about whether or not they are able to pay for their rent, let alone pay for their mortgages, because they can't afford to own a home. Yet we have the fortitude on the right here—my right—to speak about how tough it's going to be for businessmen and women.

Of course it's tough for them, and under these conditions it's going to get tougher, but if it's tough for them, how is it going to be for that worker who is earning a minimum wage and works in substandard conditions where he or she is afraid to speak up if he or she doesn't get overtime pay? We don't talk about their rights. We talk about middle-class people worrying about paying their mortgages, but we don't worry about working men and women who can't even afford to pay their rent. That's how cozy we are around this place, because we only relate to people who earn our salaries, and they're middle-class professionals.

1450

We don't seem to connect to the underbelly of our economic system, those who work because it's cheap labour and it's convenient for people who are making money off of them. It's not just here in Canada. It's done all over the world. Men and women are used for cheap labour, and in this economy it's going to get worse. And where you don't have a union to bargain for you, to defend you whenever there's a miscarriage of justice, you are on your own. Only 30%, 35% of people are unionized. The rest have no union, no one to protect them, no one to speak for them. They are on their own.

Under these economic conditions, where we are de-industrializing, we're losing our manufacturing jobs that were well-paying and were unionized. That was the middle class. We're losing our middle-class jobs. We think globalization is good; globalization has deindustrialized Canada and is deindustrializing most of the European countries to the extent that we are losing our middle class, which was, in my view, a social necessity for having what—I predict in 10, 15 years, social wars between those who have, at the very top, the 10% of the population, and the rest of the people, the 60% or 70% down below those economic levels where, when they are desperate, they will do desperate things.

Many young Tories have forgotten why those safety nets were put in place a long time ago. In the 1930s, 1940s, 1950s and 1960s there were safety nets that were put in to protect the institutions and to protect the well-to-do, to protect the people with money. Now we're forgetting that that's why we had put in place workers' compensation or unemployment insurance benefits or pensions and the like. Now people are saying, "We can't even afford people's pensions." Defined pensions: "We can't afford that. Let's put all of our money in RRSPs"—so we could lose it all when faced with this economic meltdown. So people who don't have a defined plan—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Like you, Rosie.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Like most of us here, but we have better wages than most out there.



They now are encouraged, as part of their pension plan, to make their contribution, and maybe the employer puts in a couple of thousand, to put it into their registered retirement savings plan—as if somehow that money isn't gambling money. It's gambling money, my friends. It comes and goes. It's gambling. It's casino money. It's paper money. It's people who play with our money. Some people who have a few bucks think that somehow capitalism works for them. It doesn't work too well for you either, because the people with the hedge funds, those are the ones who move money around from one place to the other in an instant, in the trillions, destroying all of us in seconds, not minutes—or in minutes, if not seconds.

This money is not protected anymore. Workers are not protected. The middle class is no longer protected. If the middle class is not protected, think about these workers who have no protections whatsoever. So I say to the minister, am I going to support your bill? How I could not support these few modest measures? We just appeal to Liberals to do a little better, a little more. We appeal to them to look at other countries in terms of efforts other countries have made to deal with some of these worker-related problems.

Ontario does lag behind European policy-makers on both the national and European union levels. Their policy-makers have developed a range of strategies to extend protections and rights to economically dependent workers in new forms of work organization. This is largely being done through measures to expand the boundaries of the scope of employment and bring some legal protection to workers previously excluded.

In countries such as New Zealand and Finland, they've expanded the scope of employment standards to address atypical and non-standard work. Germany expanded its definition of "employee" to reduce the opportunity to disguise the employment relationship. The International Labour Organization has developed conventions on home work, part-time work and employment agencies; the European Union has established directives on part-time and fixed-term contracts to bring equity between atypical or non-standard work and permanent employees, and is currently working on a temporary agency work directive. These are the kinds of things we should be looking at.

Employment is being disguised as independent contracting or franchising, as employers seek to bypass labour relations laws. Many of these practices seek to shift the costs and liabilities off the employment relationship on to intermediaries and workers who can least afford it. Employers rationalize these practices as necessities to improve flexibility in an increasingly globalized world, but workers' experiences show that outsourcing, indirect hiring and misclassifying workers takes place in sectors with distinctly local markets: business services, construction, retail, warehousing, transportation, health care, and the manufacture of goods consumed locally. This is why we need to look at what other jurisdictions have done, and Europe often leads in this particular area.

We also need to look at how we enforce anything that we do, and we have lacked enforcement powers for a long, long time. Even if we pass these modest measures, who's going to enforce any of these practices embodied in this bill? Nobody is going to be there to enforce them. Does the minister make a commitment to hiring 100, 150 or 200 inspectors to make sure that aspects of this bill and other related labour practices are going to be—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** You're saying yes?

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** We did it.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** You did? Oh, okay. This is why, I guess, you've introduced this bill, because you have the enforcement. If you had hired these people, we wouldn't even need this bill, for God's sake. If you'd hired these inspectors, we would already be exposing problems from years ago to the present. Come on. You talk about hiring these inspectors. You haven't hired—

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Squat.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Squat. Exactly. If you're going to enforce any aspects of this bill, you're going to have to hire a few inspectors, and by a few, we think it should be 100 to 150 to 200 new inspectors to be able to do the job; otherwise what you're doing means very, very little.

We also worry that regulating temp agencies' work alone may act as an incentive for employers to shift practices to other, more unregulated forms. In other words, we need to integrate legislation that deals with temporary workers into a broad update of employment standards to protect all workers. Unless we do that, all these little Liberal measures are not going to amount to much. It will make you feel good—some of you at least—but it's not going to make the workers feel that great.

We need to make sure that we protect those workers who live and work in precarious conditions, because it's an economic benefit to all. When we raise the conditions and the salaries of the working poor, we raise the conditions of all of society. We all benefit.

So I urge the minister, as he speaks or talks or negotiates about these hearings, that we have more than adequate hearings, that we have more than one or two meetings here in Toronto to give people an opportunity to talk about these issues that we, New Democrats, have raised—and, yes, to even give Tories the opportunity to make sure their ideas are heard as well. So we look forward to the minister saying, "We think hearings across Ontario are good for all of us," and I hope he will do that.

1500

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey):** Comments or questions?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I'm sure people who have been watching and listening agree that the New Democrats' concerns about this legislation warrant it going to committee for broad-based committee hearings, for thorough consideration, and not just here in Toronto, but to give those people, many of whose working lives have been nothing but temp agency work—and again, increasingly



for worker after worker after worker, their life is one of temporary work. Permanent jobs under the McGuinty government have all but ceased to exist; there has been a crisis that this government has not responded to.

New Democrats are insisting that this bill travel the province. Otherwise, the people whom it really affects—oh, the lobby groups and the organized groups and the trade unions: they'll all be able to come here to Queen's Park. The temporary agencies and whatever little groups they manage to put together: They'll come here to Queen's Park. And, oh yes, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business will come here to Queen's Park—but the little people, and I don't say that disparagingly, the hardest-working people, the people whose lives hang by a thread, paycheque to paycheque.

It's remarkable: You can't talk about people who are hired out by temp agencies without talking about those payday loan operations because, as often as not, these are the same people who get ripped off by payday loan operations. This government has done nothing to protect them from those vultures either, have they? People are being victimized. I'm talking about workers, many of them women, almost all of them poor. We're not talking about high-end head-hunting agencies that go out and find executives who can rip off taxpayers—a Hollinger. We're not talking about the Conrad Blacks; we're talking about the little people.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey):** Comments or questions? The member from Dufferin—Caledon.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** I wanted to raise an issue with Bill 139 because the minister is in the House, and he's listening intently to the debate led by the member for Trinity-Spadina. It's in reference to 74.2, "This part does not apply in relation to an individual who is an assignment employee assigned to provide professional services, personal support services or homemaking services as defined in the Long-Term Care Act." They are specifically referencing community care access centres. I'm wondering why the Liberals are attempting to bring forward a piece of legislation that is saying that the private sector is going to have a certain set of standards but the community care access centres who use temporary employees are not going to be held to the same standards. I would hope that the minister would clarify that in the House here today because I find it hard to believe that we're saying that the private sector is going to have different sets of standards than the public sector. It couldn't be because they understand the repercussions of what this would mean to the community care access centres and the added costs that would be incurred if they were having to maintain the same standards with Bill 139. I'd love to have that clarified here in the House today or certainly when Bill 139 goes forward to committee. I can't, for the life of me, understand how they would justify CCAC temp workers not being held to the same standards as temporary workers in the private sector.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey):** Further comments or questions?

I return to the member for Trinity-Spadina for a summary.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** We are appealing to those part-time workers and temporary workers to come and tell their stories. This is an opportunity for people to be able to come for five or 10 minutes and talk about what it is that they do, talk about some of the abuses in the workplace, talk about the lack of government support and talk about how we can improve this bill so the lives of men and women are changed in a much more positive way.

The member from Dufferin—Caledon raised an issue that the member from Welland also talked about, where section 74.2 excludes a worker who is an assignment employee assigned to provide services under contract with the community care access centre or who is doing work governed by a contract to a CCAC. We don't understand why they're excluded. We want people to come and talk to us about that. We want the government members to come and defend their position. We want to hear the stories that you have to tell us. That's what hearings are all about. If you can do that and if you can come to those hearings, you'll be able to help cozy MPPs live a little bit more consciously about the kinds of things that you have to face. Because, as Kormos says, our work here is not as hard as some of the work that some people do. I wouldn't go as far as he does when he says that we don't work hard, but it's a different point.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Show me your hands.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** These are a working man's hands. These hands come from a father who was a construction worker.

But we want to hear those stories, and I'm hoping that you'll come and depute, and call us if you need help to get on that list.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey):** Are there any other members who wish to participate in this debate?

The Minister of Labour has moved second reading of Bill 139, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000, in relation to temporary help agencies and certain other matters.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. I declare the motion carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey):** Shall the bill be moved for third reading?

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** I ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey):** So ordered. The bill is referred to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly.



GREEN ENERGY AND GREEN  
ECONOMY ACT, 2009  
LOI DE 2009 SUR L'ÉNERGIE VERTE  
ET L'ÉCONOMIE VERTE

Resuming the debate adjourned on February 26, 2009, on the motion for second reading of Bill 150, An Act to enact the Green Energy Act, 2009 and to build a green economy, to repeal the Energy Conservation Leadership Act, 2006 and the Energy Efficiency Act and to amend other statutes / Projet de loi 150, Loi édictant la Loi de 2009 sur l'énergie verte et visant à développer une économie verte, abrogeant la Loi de 2006 sur le leadership en matière de conservation de l'énergie et la Loi sur le rendement énergétique et modifiant d'autres lois.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey):** The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for allowing me to join this debate, late though it is. We deferred our lead last week because we were trying to get some further information on this bill, which the minister described when he was promoting it as being a bill of magnificent and gargantuan proportions that was maybe the biggest thing to hit Ontario since the ice storm of 1998.

I'm not sure just what he was referring to, because the bill was introduced last Monday. We had never seen the bill prior to that. Nobody sees the bill, as you know, until it's introduced in the House and tabled.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Caucus certainly doesn't.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It certainly doesn't. We had no opportunity to caucus, nor did the members of the third party.

So we asked for a little bit more time and wondered what would be the need and the rush to get this bill through post-haste without proper debate of any real significance and of any real substance. We referred, as a matter of fact, to the government's own precedent.

You have to understand, Mr. Speaker, as I know you do, that this bill amends or repeals 15 other acts currently on the books in the province of Ontario. This would be described by some as an omnibus bill that requires extensive and total and complete debate before proceeding. So what we did is, we asked for the government to follow its own example. I know it's hard sometimes for us to say to the government, "Please follow the example of the previous government or a government that sat in another Parliament," and we understand the reluctance of them to do that. But all we asked, Mr. Speaker, was for them to follow their own example and do what then-Energy Minister Dwight Duncan did when he introduced Bill 100, and I know you recall that bill because I believe you spoke on it.

1510

What Minister Duncan did at the time was he recognized that the bill, which again amended a bunch of acts and covered a whole lot of bases in the electricity sector—he took the step of allowing that bill to go to

committee prior to second reading, after first reading. He felt, and rightfully so, that the bill needed to be digested and analyzed and properly debated throughout the province—and I participated in many of those committee hearings as well—so that all of the relevant people, stakeholders and citizens in the province of Ontario who had some issues with the bill or maybe just believed that there was a way they could improve the bill on behalf of the rest of the people of Ontario, had an opportunity to speak. Sadly, given the energy and infrastructure minister—but for the purpose of this bill we will just call him the energy minister or we may call him the minister of everything because he apparently wants to take over the responsibilities of all ministers in this House and answer all questions, even when they're not directed to him. Sadly, given the opportunity to do the right thing, did he choose to do the right thing? No. He had the opportunity. We gave it to him. We were being very magnanimous about the whole issue. We want to get to the bottom of things. We want to do what is best for the people all across the province of Ontario. We gave him that opportunity and he said no.

You know I'm not one to quote other people out of context or something like that, but what he was really saying was, "We need this bill and we need it passed now because we don't want people across the province of Ontario to take a good, hard, long look at this piece of legislation. We want to sneak it in by cover of darkness, if possible, but we realize we have to do some debating in this House. We want to sneak it through and hope that by the time the people realize it, it'll be passed."

We, as Her Majesty's loyal opposition, cannot allow that to happen without exacting at least the minimum amount of debate that we can get this government to participate in. So that's what we're doing, that's why we're having this debate now. We had hoped to go to committee first—and I'll touch on committee a little later in my address—but I think that, at the very least, we're here where we are now and we can't change that even though we disagree emphatically with the actions of the government. But at the very least, as this progresses and as we take this bill through this House—and we have no doubt, we're not delusional here. We know that this bill is going to pass because Premier McGuinty's office will have made sure that every member of the government side knows that they're either voting for this bill or they're not well that day. They're not going to be allowing people to vote against this bill, we know that. So given the fact that the numbers are on their side and not on our side, we know this bill is going to pass, and so be it. So that gives us an opportunity then to take this bill out across the province for other people to look at it.

The minister kind of chided us or chastised us for even expecting that we would get further information on the bill before bringing it before this House; he kind of belittled our request. Subsequent to that, it appears that the minister was having trouble understanding the bill himself. In questions from reporters, when asked about the warrantless entry, he couldn't seem to understand it.



Earlier today, in referencing a question, the minister talked about trying to compare the warrantless entry to a situation that existed in a bill under the previous government in 2002, which was one that allowed investigators to go in to protect consumers where there was nefarious actions on the part of generators or billers—totally unrelated to what we were talking about today. The warrantless entry into people's businesses would be to see if they've done an energy audit: to rifle through their personal possessions, to uproot drawers and go through untold documents to see if they can find an energy audit. This will not do a single thing to improve or reduce greenhouse gases or make it greener. It's just an energy audit.

The bill doesn't compel anybody to do anything in their home. It's just that they have to pay hundreds of dollars to have an energy audit done. Much of it could be done by yourself. You can walk into a house if you're looking to buy it. You can read the CMHC stamps in the windows. It will tell you what year those windows were produced. You'll know how old the windows are. You'll have a pretty good idea of whether they need replacing—and that's if they're a double-sealed window. If they're older, if they're a single-pane window, we know that they're not energy-efficient, and you don't need an audit to tell you that. You can also determine the date and the relative condition of a furnace much easier than having an energy audit. If it's old and tired, it's probably a good question to be asking for more details on the furnace as you negotiate that real estate transaction. Those provisions are there today. You can ask those kinds of questions in any kind of real estate transaction. In fact, you could ask for an energy audit to be done. It doesn't have to be mandatory.

A good question is where we're going to get the people to do these mandatory audits, or maybe that's what the minister is talking about when he talks about the 50,000 jobs that he believes—excuse me. Last week it was 50,000 jobs will be created; later in the week, it has the potential to create 50,000 jobs. Now that's pretty broad: "potential." The Toronto Maple Leafs have the potential to win the Stanley Cup this year. Does anybody believe that they're going to win it? No. They have the potential. They can still make the playoffs and they can still win the cup. There's nothing to preclude them from winning the Stanley Cup, other than the fact that, as we know, it ain't gonna happen, just as we know that he's not going to create those 50,000 jobs. I'm a Leafs fan, but I'm realistic enough to know that it's not going to happen.

Then, on Focus Ontario on Saturday night, the energy minister was asked by Sean Mallen of Global TV about those 50,000 jobs and how he's going to create them. I want to quote. Sean Mallen said, "Okay, but my question that I was leading up to was 50,000 jobs. How do you know it's going to create 50,000 jobs? Where will the jobs be?" The minister, who only a week earlier was saying, "Absolutely guaranteed, nothing to worry about"—and that's just the start—what did he say? "Well, how

does one ever know these things?" That's kind of confusing because, you see, on one hand the minister was absolutely certain and that's what he talked about in this act: "We're going to give you certainty."

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Like coal-fired generation—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Yeah. So when you say, "How does one know these things? How does one ever know these things?" I don't think that's certainty. In fact, the minister is starting to doubt his own blather.

The minister talked about—but he got a dressing-down on this one, I think. I think the Premier called him into the office and he said, "George, I know you want to be the minister of everything. You're trying to display that. You probably even want to be Premier. But as long as I, Dalton McGuinty, am Premier, you ain't going to be making those kinds of statements."

1520

You see, the minister said last week in his press conference, "This would mean"—and listen carefully to this, Mr. Speaker, because you don't want to miss it. You'll be able to tell those people back home what your minister said. He said—

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** On a point of order, Speaker: The member is welcome to debate the bill but he is clearly in violation of standing order 23(i), "Imputes false or unavowed motives to another member," which is exactly what he's doing—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lou Rinaldi):** I think the member is in order, but please try to stay on track. Thank you.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much. Please advise the minister of points of order to read that book before he stands up. Anyway, you see, he understands that I am somewhat hypothesizing because I wasn't actually there. But we can read between the lines; I think we're allowed to do that.

The minister was taken to task in the Premier's office. The Premier said, "Don't you be making those statements there, George. It doesn't look good." So here's the minister, he's going out there saying, "This will lead to a 1% increase per year in your hydro bill." It's laughable, absolutely laughable.

So the Premier thought, "We can't have George going around saying these things, because people are starting to say, 'Wow! Come on! Jeez, we knew we couldn't believe them when they said they were going to close the coal-fired power plants, but maybe we thought they'd actually learned the lesson and they were going to try to stick to the facts.'"

It's not rocket science. You're going to spend—and this is the minister himself—billions and billions and billions. If Carl Sagan was still around, you'd think it was him talking. The minister's going to spend all of this money. And you know what, folks? "It ain't gonna cost you a dime." Does anybody really believe that? We all know that there is no free ride. You don't get anything for nothing in this world.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Someone's got to pay.



**Mr. John Yakabuski:** But somebody's got to pay. When you decide that you're going to take an energy system, and try to bring in a whole lot of expensive generation to replace cheaper generation, the price must go up. He alluded to that when Mr. Sean Mallen on Focus Ontario asked him about the price, because of the fact that in Germany—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** —the price is 24 cents—thank you very much—24 cents a kilowatt hour; in Denmark it's over 35. Mr. Mallen asked him about that and he said, "Well, you've got to remember, we're not going to have that amount of renewable power. They've got way more than we do." So he's admitting renewable power is going to be expensive, but he's also saying that you really aren't going to bring that much online.

I don't know what he considers a high enough percentage, but in Germany, renewable wind produces less than 8% of their power. Even though it has almost 30% of the installed capacity, it produces only 8% of the power. This is the thing that the government doesn't want to talk about. Everybody in this House is in favour of a cleaner, greener environment. No party is greener than the Progressive Conservatives.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** You will recall the former government and the Lands for Life act. You will recall the former government's Smart Growth, to curb the broadening and the growth of cities all over this province. To this day, there is only one minister—and that was Elizabeth Witmer, when she was the Minister of the Environment—who actually ordered the closure of a coal-fired generating station in this province. These folks have not ordered anything. Only one minister did it, and that was Liz Witmer. Now, the Liberals were there for the photo op when the stacks came down. They were all lined up making sure they had their picture taken, but it was Liz Witmer who ordered that station shut down and closed. So let's not forget that there is no party that recognizes the need for protecting the environment more than the Progressive Conservatives. However, we won't just tell you a story. We won't try to snow you or even, I dare say, possibly mislead people. We won't do that. We're going to tell them the facts, and we're going to allow people to make decisions based on the facts.

Let's go back a little bit in time, because I'm trying to frame this in a way that people understand. I know you understand, Speaker, and I don't think you're a part of it. I think that a big part of you would really like to stay away from it, but I know you're in a party that is pretty well controlled by one office. But I think there's hope.

Anyway, let's go back to 2003 and the iron-clad Liberal promise to close coal-fired generation stations in the province of Ontario by 2007. The Premier claimed that he based that promise on expert advice from people in the energy field who could absolutely ascertain that it was doable. I asked then-Energy Minister Dwight Duncan in estimates two years ago, "Will you provide the names of those said experts that the Premier alludes to?

Provide those names to the House." I asked it in estimates, and the minister said to me, "Absolutely." Well, just like that elusive Stanley Cup, I'm still waiting.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Well, the guy's name was Kinsella.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It could have been Warren Kinsella, but he's too busy trying—I understand he wants to be a food critic now, and go around insulting hard-working people in the Chinese community. But that's Warren Kinsella. What can we do about him? I'll get my name on his blog again this week, maybe.

Let's get back to the issue: the feed-in tariff the minister talks about. Let's get back to those 50,000 jobs. They're bouncing around. They really don't know where they're going to create the jobs. They don't even know if they're creatable, and they certainly cannot state that those jobs are permanent or sustainable. You have to understand that if some of those jobs are going into the erection of wind towers, once the towers are up, the jobs are done. They're wishing and hoping that they can create 50,000 jobs. But as Randall Denley, an excellent columnist for the Ottawa Citizen, said in his column, and I'll paraphrase, you might think you want to create 50,000 jobs, but wake up; you lost 71,000 jobs just last month in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario. How do you balance that?

They're going to create 50,000 jobs, maybe—that's what they claim—but I don't think there are too many people left in the province of Ontario who believe too much of what comes out of the Premier's office or from the minister of everything. He wants his name changed from George Smitherman to C.D. Howe, because he wants to be the boss of everything.

Anyway, I don't think there are people out there who believe—

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** What about Boss Hogg?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Boss Hogg? Well, I don't know about that. That's Dukes of Hazzard. That's an American icon. We're sticking to Canadian icons, Peter.

I don't think there are people who believe much that's coming out of that office these days, certainly not when it comes to their being straightforward. I don't want to get ruled out of order here; I don't want the minister of points of order to stand up. I want to make sure I don't say anything that's unparliamentary, but people just don't believe them. If somebody never believes anything you say, you know what they think you are? That's kind of what I'm trying to say.

1530

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** That you're lying with dogs.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Yes, exactly.

So, Randall Denley just wonders where these guys are coming from with not only their job projections, but the fact that they're throwing this whole thing out as a smokescreen, a distraction, a diversion from their sorry economic record. I'll quote the first line of his piece:

"When a politician is in deep trouble, he typically seeks to create a distraction. Trouble doesn't get much worse than the type that Ontario Premier Dalton Mc-



Guinity is facing. Desperate to change the channel from continuing job losses and a ballooning provincial deficit, McGuinity this week championed the Green Energy Act."

He doesn't want people talking about the economy. He doesn't want people talking about job losses in Ontario, and every day, the news gets worse. Where's Dalton McGuinity?

I tell you what he doesn't appear to be doing: doing something. He doesn't seem to be doing something about the economy, because, while every other jurisdiction that recognized the state of the economy not only here but elsewhere—and I concede that; I want to be fair—moved post-haste to bring in an economic stimulus package and a budget to ensure—you know, you don't send the carpenter to fix the electrical panel. When the job requires new expertise, you send in a new expert, and you certainly have to have a different tool box.

What was passed in the budget of last year is irrelevant. This party and John Tory and this party have been calling for a new budget from this provincial government for weeks and months, and they sit back and somehow hope that Stephen Harper does their work for them. Well, Stephen Harper's tired of bailing them out. It's time that you guys took the little pacifier out of your mouths and stood up and took your first steps and got on with the job yourselves. It's time to grow up. You can't sit back there and wait for Stephen Harper and the federal government to do all the work for you. That's got to stop. People in Ontario expect better.

They want to talk about the minister talking about some of the plans. There are some things in here that, I have to tell you, I think have some merit. I like much of the biomass aspect of it because it's not just about creating energy, but two of our most historically significant and important sectors of our economy and the Canadian way of life, the Ontario way of life, would benefit by that, namely the agricultural sector and the forestry sector. They're two sectors, Mr. Speaker, that you know, because you have certainly agricultural; I don't think you've got much forestry down there, but I could be wrong. But you certainly have agricultural, and you know how important they are and you know how they are struggling.

Those kinds of aspects, I think, because they are two-pronged in their approach, have some merits, but we do need to get the details. We need to put some meat on the bone. You just can't have the minister going around and sending out his minions and telling them that "our Green Energy Act is the panacea for everything that ails people in the province of Ontario," because we know that that's simply not true.

Let's get down to some more issues—and it is tough to keep these things all organized. We've had so much input, I have to tell you, from across the province from people concerned about this act. I have to believe that the honourable members across the way, and even the minister of points of order, have certainly heard something about this act from people in their constituencies who are opposed to it and are opposed to different aspects of the act.

I want you to go home this weekend to your constituencies and talk to the people out there and ask them, and be straight with them. Don't give them the song-and-dance spin—and that's no pun intended for the wind developers, but don't give them that spin coming out from the Minister of Energy about how everything here is great, because at the end of the day, how much of Ontario's energy are you actually going to make up? We know it's got to be much, much less than 7%, because that's what Germany's getting. He said, "Oh, that's way out of there; it's not even going to be close to that." But we need to know how much people are going to be paying for this.

The Premier talked about his mother. I've never met his mother, but I'm sure she's a wonderful lady. But—

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Disappointed.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I don't know that, but she may have reason to be.

But I will say this: The Premier likes to cite his mother as an example because it paints him as being the wonderful son and the wonderful family man in the all-Canadian sort of family portrayal, but he has to tell his mother all of the facts, too. He's saying, "My mother shouldn't be focusing on the rate of electricity," and now we know it's going up, when you're saying, "My mother shouldn't worry about the rate; she should worry about the bill." He was alluding to the fact that Germans pay a much higher rate for hydro, but their bills aren't higher.

Well, I don't know if any of the people on the other side of the House were born in Germany. My wife was born in Germany, and I know that at least one other member of our caucus was born in Germany. I sent a picture over to the Premier. I drew a little picture for him. I drew this little, wee house and I put underneath it, "German house." Then I built this great, big house and I said, "Woodbridge house" or "Markham house." I said, "That's why you can't compare the household energy bill in Germany with the household energy bill here." When it comes to power consumption in a home, size matters.

You've got to be straight with people. Don't try and snow them. Don't try and hornswaggle them and lead them down a garden path. That's wrong. You can't be doing that. You've got to be straight with people. So don't compare an energy bill of a house in Germany and an energy bill of a house in Ontario.

They talk about how they want to emulate some of the things that Barack Obama is doing in the United States.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Hope.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Barack Obama—

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** "Yes, we can."

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** But they only want to pick part of it. Then Minister Smitherman tells them on Global's Focus Ontario, "It's all about getting to be greener and cleaner, but the Conservatives want to turn those stacks upside down in those coal plants and capture the CO<sub>2</sub>."

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell:** That's not even possible.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** The member for Huron—Bruce says that's impossible. Maybe she should talk to Barack Obama, who has made an absolute commitment. As



Barack Obama said, "Do you know what? If we can put a man on the moon, we are going to find a way to economically capture carbon." That's what Barack Obama said.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** There's so much anger over there.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Well, there's so much anger. I can understand why. When you put something out and it bounces back at you with a little bit of a pushback and the people of the province of Ontario are clearly not happy and they ain't buying what you're selling, of course there's anger over there.

Here's a little example of the feed-in tariff and how it has worked in Germany. This is what the province wants to do. They want to use a feed-in tariff, which means they're going to set a price and they're going to pay it. It's not going to be a bid process. They're just going to say, "This is what we'll pay." They're not putting caps on how much they'll accept. They're just saying, "This is what we'll pay," and they'll pay different amounts for different areas based on the suitability or the availability of the source, being the wind.

1540

I'm going to read this because I don't want anybody to assume or think that it's me talking here, because I certainly don't consider myself that much of an expert to be able to draw these conclusions, but obviously, they're out there. This is from Germany's Solar Cell Promotion: Dark Clouds on the Horizon:

"This article demonstrates that the large feed-in tariffs currently guaranteed for solar electricity in Germany constitute a subsidization regime that, if extended to 2020, threatens to reach a level comparable to that of German hard coal production, a notoriously outstanding example of misguided political intervention.... Similarly disappointing is the net employment balance"—the net employment balance—"which is likely to be negative if one takes into account the opportunity cost of this form of solar photovoltaic support.... We therefore recommend the immediate and drastic reduction of the magnitude of the feed-in tariffs granted for solar-based electricity...."

"In 2007, the estimated share of wind power in Germany's electricity production amounted to 7.4%.... In contrast, the electricity produced through ... photovoltaic was ... 0.4%.

"Under this regime, which is based on the Renewable Energy Sources Act ... utilities are obliged to accept the delivery of power from independent producers of renewable electricity into their own grid, thereby paying technology-specific feed-in tariffs far above" their "own production cost.... Ultimately, though, it is the industrial and private consumers that have to bear the cost induced by the" tariff—"through an increase in the price of electricity. Wind power has so far exerted the strongest effect on electricity prices."

The people have a right to know what this is going to mean in electricity prices.

I just want to read something from an article that I got with respect to Germany's plans. They're always talking

about how they love the German example, but Germany has gone down the road very far with respect to renewables, and it has created some challenges for them:

"German State Agency Calls for New Power Stations.

"Germany must press on with building up conventional power generation alongside its push for a renewable energy expansion to avoid supply shortfalls and rising prices, German energy agency Dena said on Tuesday"; that's Tuesday, February 10 of this year.

"Demand increases and supply volatility arising from a growing share of erratic production from renewable sources still make new coal and gas-fired power stations necessary, Dena managing director Stephan Kohler said during a trade fair.

"The state agency upheld forecasts Germany could be short of some 12,000 megawatts, or 15 large units, by 2020...."

"New build of fossil fuels-based power plants is essential to cover demand peaks, to avoid an efficiency gap due to old plants running longer and to speed innovation...."

"This is also to avoid rising power prices and to ensure Germany's role as a base for industry is safeguarded."

"Kohler illustrated problems with wind energy, saying 23,000 megawatts were nominally installed, but high pressure fronts in January curbed wind speeds. On one day, only 113 megawatts capacity was active"—113 megawatts out of 23,000.

You can't rely on that, and the Premier has said it himself. I know he sometimes wants to distance himself from things he says because they get him into trouble, because sometimes he doesn't do his research, and I don't think they did the research on this one. But he has said, "Wind is not dependable. We can't depend on wind." Wind is a wonderful source of energy if you take away the negative. There are no fuel costs; there are no emissions; there's no waste. There's no waste product after the production of the energy. But the biggest problem it's got is the one that you cannot get around, that it is totally indispensible. You can't control it. In an electricity system, you know that you have to be able to ensure that the power that is needed is in the system when it's needed.

**Ms. Laurel C. Broten:** Oh, I tried that. Let's not put up any windmills.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I'll give you a couple of numbers for our own system here. We have 887 megawatts installed in the province of Ontario. I'll just give you some numbers from 2009, on February 28, a Saturday: at 3 o'clock, 42 megawatts; 4 o'clock, 25; 5 o'clock, nine; 6 o'clock, 21. That's what we were getting. Granted—I want to be fair—we've also had some very good days. But it speaks to the issue. We have good days in our nuclear plants every day—every day—because we can depend on them to put out the power we need 24/7, 365 days a year. The fact that we have a good day with wind or several good days—and February is traditionally a pretty good month for wind historically. It's a different



problem in the summer months, when the wind doesn't blow as much.

I would encourage all of you to actually go to the IESO's website, and you can get the hourly reports for any generator in the province of Ontario. It will tell you what each unit of each nuclear plant, each coal plant, each hydroelectric facility, each gas plant and each wind facility is putting out at any given hour. I think it's important not just for the people, but also for the members of this House—it's accessible; it's not hard to find—so that you understand yourselves that we have a hybrid system. We support that, but there are limits to how far you can go with the weaker forms of generation, the ones that have such an inherent weakness, which is indispachability.

We have to ensure that we have control of the power, because power without control is nothing, and Mr. Kormos, I know, would agree with me. Power without control is not good; in fact, it's dangerous.

How much time have I got left? I do want to talk about some of the issues that have been raised to us by members of the public and/or stakeholders. I would request, possibly, to have unanimous consent to go on for an extra hour, if I could, because there are many things in this bill that I'm not going to have time in the time allotted. So I would certainly entertain that as a possibility.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Did you ask him?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I haven't asked him. Can I ask him?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Yes, please.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I would move for unanimous consent that I have an extra hour to cover all of the points, because I know they're interested. I'm trying to help them. I want them to be able to help their constituents.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lou Rinaldi):** The member is asking for unanimous consent. I hear a no.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I heard the minister of unanimous consent over there say no. It's the same minister who knows the standing orders, or thinks he does.

I want to talk about some of the things that people have written to us about. I want to be clear that I am not a scientist. I know that we actually have a scientist in our midst here, and I had the pleasure of sharing the company of the member for Richmond Hill, Mr. Moridi, at the Canadian Nuclear Association conference last week.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** He supports nuclear too.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Well, I'll bet he does. He is a nuclear physicist, I believe, by profession, so he is an expert in some of these fields. Perhaps he needs to be talking to the minister of everything, and maybe he can educate him as well. He's a very, very interesting man, and I must say I enjoyed the conversations we had at that conference.

1550

The point that I'm making is that I'm not an expert; I'm not a doctor and I'm not a scientist, so I'm relating some of these things, but I want you to know that they're out there, Mr. Speaker. I can't speak from a position of authority on some of these issues, but they are coming to

us in copious quantities. The e-mails are coming left, right and centre, as they say; high, wide and handsome, as my brother likes to say. He must be talking about himself. But anyway, we're getting these e-mails with regard to a number of concerns, and one of the concerns is the effect that these turbines may or may not have on people's health. We haven't raised this in this House because I'm not sitting here and saying that I can confirm, but I think it is important that the government recognize that those people are out there and they need to be heard. I can't say that these things are happening, but I most certainly cannot say that they're not happening.

I just want to read a letter from—not a constituent of mine, but these things come to me as the energy critic as well:

"So far the Premier and his ministers have simply denied the existence of these problems" related to health problems. "Premier McGuinty, in fact, stated that there are no reliable peer-reviewed studies authenticating these health concerns, yet the government has not brought forward any such studies that prove his counter-argument. The fact is that enough uncertainty"—and again, this speaks to the minister's word, "certainty": "We want to bring certainty," he said; I'm certain he used that word—"The fact is that enough uncertainty exists that it should compel the government to undertake a fully comprehensive and independent examination of noise, flicker effects, stray voltage and other factors that are known to affect people's health, regardless of their source.

"Wind turbines, once built, are and will be with us for a minimum of 21 years, according to the act. Three or four months of study now could save disastrous results that would be extremely expensive to reverse."

That is from Donna and Larry Close in Flesherton.

They also go on to question the McGuinty government's contention that they'll create 50,000 jobs. I kind of like this one, so I'm going to read it:

"McGuinty and company are pushing forward their green energy and wind turbine agenda on the basis that it will create more than 50,000 jobs over the next three years. First, how this number was calculated remains a mystery, but it is expected that it came from proponents in the industry. In a pre-introduction speech to the Toronto Board of Trade on February 20"—so Mr. Close watches these things closely—"Mr. Smitherman offered up a shopping list of professions that would gain employment from this green energy initiative. There was no offer to justify the conveniently round number or to identify where those jobs might occur, whether they would be part-time or full-time, how permanent they would be or any of the other details that would enable us to audit the success or failure and to hold the government accountable." Pretty reasonable statement. "To his credit"—this is the part I really like, actually—"Mr. Smitherman did not include in his list any butchers, bakers or candlestick makers, but their exclusion did not make his claims any more believable."

So you can see that there's a lot of doubt out there about the government's ability to follow through on what they're promising.



Another part that is very troubling—oh, my goodness, I haven't even got off of page 1. We're going to have to look at that unanimous consent again. Ministerial powers—and this is not a prop, Mr. Speaker; it's part of the legislation. In no less than 20 sections of this bill—listen carefully to this—the minister has broad and sweeping powers to direct. This allows him to have total and sole discretion about what he does.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Would that he would use it.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Would that he would use it. Do you think George would use it?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I don't think so.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Do you think he likes power?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** He likes that.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Oh, man, I'm telling you: 20 sections—unbelievable. As the person who wrote this for me said, "You asked me to provide you with a list of the new powers being centralized in the office of the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure, Ontario's new super-minister."

You have to take a look at this, folks. For the sake of every citizen in the province of Ontario, for the sake of the rest of you members of the Liberal caucus, do you really want one single member to have this kind of power to direct everything to do with energy in the province of Ontario? I don't think so.

Just leafing through here for a minute—give me a moment, because there's a lot of stuff here. That's essentially why we need more time, of course, Mr. Speaker.

I have e-mails from Ann and Larry Towell, Donna Gage and John McGee asking us to please take a look at what this government is doing in this bill.

One of the things in those ministerial powers—I've got to tell you this, Mr. Speaker, because you'll be concerned. Have you ever been to Algonquin park? I knew you had. Well, I didn't actually know that, but it's sort of like that potential the minister likes to talk about. Under this act, the Minister of Energy could—could—order that turbines be built in Algonquin park. If you're familiar with the park, and I know now that you are, there are some really good ridges in the park that would actually be conducive to significant amounts of wind. Are we serious that we're thinking of building turbines in Algonquin park?

Now, I know the minister is going to say—and other members of the Liberal Party are going to say, because they're told what to say anyway—"Oh, we're never going to do that. We're never going to use that power." Well, if you're never going to use it, why are you putting it in the act in the first place? Why are you opening the door to something as nefarious as building turbines in a provincial park?

I can tell you this: In the community of South Algonquin, which is in the shadow of Algonquin park, the minister has condemned the local council for voting not to allow turbines in their community.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** How could he do that? Condemned? Really?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** He wrote a letter to them.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Stripping? A little strip?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I don't think it was necessary, I say to the member from Trinity-Spadina, but that's the way the minister reacts. As soon as somebody challenges him, he's just gotta show that he's the boss.

That's something we're really concerned about. I want to get to something here, but my filing system is, well, about as good as it is in my office, I guess. This is from Julius Grodski: "I like to express to you the need for a well-evaluated approach to the matters of energy, as the issue is getting a dramatically different outlook elsewhere in the world (e.g. Denmark and Germany) with the recognition that the wind farms have not reduced either the need for fossil-based plants," which I talked about earlier, or "total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions."

In fact, in those countries, even though they've done all of this renewable energy, they have not reduced those emissions as a result of that. Interesting stuff, isn't it? Because this is how the minister purports this act is going to do everything to clean up the air.

1600

Now, they talk about building all kinds of gas plants. There are some genuine concerns out there. I think everybody out there knows this, but I'm not sure, so I'm going to repeat it if I have said it already. But we do know this: that for every megawatt of non-dispatchable power you have, you must back that up with a megawatt of dispatchable power, something you control. So if you have 4,000 megawatts of wind, you'll have to have 4,000 megawatts of something that is dispatchable, and I don't include nuclear in that, because for the most part it's non-dispatchable. It likes to run with the gas pedal to the floor; that's how it runs best and most efficiently. I know that Mr. Moridi would agree with me there. If you don't trust me, talk to your colleague. He's a good man.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Well, I hope he uses the two minutes to respond.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Yes.

So the gas situation is thus: that at dawn we have about—and we have enough gas storage for about eight days under normal use. If we had to produce a whole heck of a lot more of our power from gas, would it not stand to reason that we may actually jeopardize the ability of people to heat their homes and water if we got a particularly chilling and cold winter? You've got to be able to balance the supply with the demand, and natural gas requires storage. These are real, genuine issues that you need to think about when you're planning an energy act in the province of Ontario.

I've got a really good e-mail here but I just can't find it. It was from a person who certainly knows the business, but—

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Take your time.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I can't waste it, because then I'll lose the—I don't think you'll stop the clock while I look for papers, Mr. Speaker, will you? I didn't think so.

This one e-mail says, "The more I read in this bill and the various commentaries, the more frightened I become about:



"1. Pushing residents and municipal councils completely out of the site selection process for renewable projects...."

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** You didn't get a standing ovation; you orchestrated one, I say to the member for Ottawa-Orléans.

"3. The new inspectors to be hired to go anywhere they please to enforce the act, carrying with them the threat of huge fines"—\$10,000 to \$25,000.

"4. Completely changing the economic regulation mandate of the OEB." Absolutely right. Read the bill, folks. It's disturbing; it's scary.

"5. The clear intent to use electricity rates as a means of income redistribution.

"6. Greatly increasing the ability of the minister to issue directives to the OEB, IESO, OPA etc. without cabinet approval.

"7. Forcing energy audits and related bureaucracy onto an already suffering real estate market.

"Smitherman is personally taking complete control of the electricity business and no one is going to get in his way."

That's what that concerned member of the public said, and it's hard to disagree with him that that's what is happening here. It's not exactly a coup attempt, but it's something afoot.

Today the Minister of Culture—who's also the minister responsible for seniors, as you know, Mr. Speaker—was asked a question. This is unbelievable: The minister responsible for seniors was asked a question and she directed it to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; bounced it, punted it. Do you know that before Jim Watson, the minister, could get out of his chair—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lou Rinaldi):** I would ask the member to get back to the bill that he's speaking on.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It is.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lou Rinaldi):** I think you're going a little bit off kilter. I would just ask the member to get back on track.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** The minister punted it to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, but before he could get out of his chair, the minister of everything was up, answering the question. It just didn't seem to matter what was being asked. He's the guy who's going to answer it. I know you guys want to have work and you like to be here, and I really appreciate that, and I think it's important that you come here. But you're probably going to be told at the next cabinet meeting that your presence but not your answers are going to be needed; your presence is welcome, but your answers won't be needed because George will answer everything.

That's what's happening here in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario, and the people out there who are the most affected by this—and I'll make this point again because I believe it or not, am down to my last minute.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** That's terrible, that someone would cheer when a speaker is going to end. It never happened in this House on our side. We would never do that.

Because there is so much at stake and so many people affected by this—people in my riding who own mills, people in my riding who are on low incomes; they're everywhere in the province—it's time for you people to have a sober second look at this. We realize you're going to pass it. Now, get it to a committee. Let us take this bill throughout the province from far and wide in every kind of community, to rich and poor. Everybody who can have a word on this, let them have a word on it. Let the stakeholders who are affected by this, the businesses, the manufacturers who you've almost put out of business in this province with your tax policies, let them all have a chance to have their say on this bill so that, before the end of the day, we get the best piece of legislation possible, not something that just George Smitherman likes.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lou Rinaldi):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Mike Harris should not have changed the rules in this place that obviously restricted the ability of the members to be able to speak as much as they possibly want. Why he changed the rules is beyond me. That was a whole hour, and people need the time. You noticed the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke needed the time, and needed more time because he's got a whole lot of stuff he wants to say. That's why I was upset with Mike Harris changing the rules.

But there are two things I agree with that I want to say to the member, and nothing else. I'm going to have 20 minutes—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Just say the things you agree with.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Two things: One of them is that he quite rightly said—because the minister pointed out that the bill would only increase ratepayer costs by 1%. He did say that. The point is, if the government hasn't yet seen the price at which they will buy green energy and won't say how much green energy will come online, then how on earth do they know the electricity rates will only be upped by 1%? I agree with that very reasonable, plausible remark he made. Given that the feed-in tariffs for wind and solar are two to three times higher than the cost of coal-fired electricity, how is it that the increase in hydro rates will be so low? These are good questions, and I wanted to agree with them.

I was going to go on with that, but the second thing—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Is this another agreement?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Yes, the other one I agree with: This is where the minister is certain that they will create 50,000 jobs. He was certain about that, but uncertain about so many other things. These are the two things that I want to agree with you on, and I'll have 20 minutes to state my differences with your party in the next six minutes or so.

1610

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lou Rinaldi):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Laurel C. Broten:** I'm pleased to have a chance to respond to the many points raised by the member for



Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. In the time I have, I'll focus my attention on two specific points.

As has been said from the outset, and by my friend opposite, the Green Energy Act is to establish a new framework to transform our energy needs, get off fossil fuel, reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, create jobs and protect the planet. I don't know about the members on that side of the House, but that's what my constituents have sent us here to do. The feed-in tariff, which is at the root of that transformation, is a very specific mechanism by which we will be able to alter the way we produce and generate electricity in this province, and it is something that was scarcely mentioned in my friend's speech.

I thought I might just identify for him that other places around the world—this is in this month's Walrus magazine: "The engine of this radical transformation is the single most effective climate policy measure yet devised: a straightforward law called a feed-in tariff that obliges power distributors to purchase electricity from renewable sources for a fixed time, at fixed rates above market prices....

"It has also crossed the pond, after a fashion, inspiring Ontario's pacesetting standard offer program," our last foray into this.

We are now building upon this transformational stage that we established some number of years ago. I can tell you that the leading-edge folks in Germany—for example, Hermann Scheer has said, "It is the most successful new job creation program we ever had, and the most ... effective job creation program."

That's what we should be undertaking in this province. That's what the Green Energy Act is all about.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lou Rinaldi):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** I appreciate the opportunity to speak.

First of all, we do hear significant concerns about the cost, but there's been a lot of research on this, and I hope the members have looked at a lot of research. I don't know if you've seen the extent; I know I have worked on it. A California study talks about the impact of wind turbines on red-tailed hawks. For those who don't know, wind turbines are basically extremely conducive with red-tailed hawk habitat, and they're the number one animals that are affected by them. I doubt very much whether you have.

I want to mention some things that I hope the government looks into—I know the minister is paying attention. A previous government committed funds for a crown wind review. What that did, in a different ministry, was determine sites that are best applicable to wind turbines throughout Ontario. If that research goes to waste, then we're just spending money for no good reason at all. I hope they would look into that research and ensure that the research that was done there is very much used throughout the province, because it's going to help out a lot.

Another aspect of wind turbines that I have some strong concerns with: Part of it is much like in the mining

sector. For those who don't know, people in the mining sector will go out and stake claims just to tie up the land, never intending to use those claims. The one thing you want to make sure of with the wind turbines, when you're using them out there and you put them in sites, is that some people are not taking the sites so that others can't use them. It's a free and open market, and you want to make sure it's taking place.

Another area: There are some communities that could benefit immediately from this, and those would be First Nations communities. A lot of these are dependent on diesel generation for their energy, which is only taken in on winter roads. They take an entire year's supply of gas into these communities to keep them going through all year long until freeze-up and they can get in. If you put wind turbines on these sites immediately, they will have a substantial impact on those communities over a long period of time.

Last, in the time I'm allowed, is the question about why the park's issue was in the ministry not in Natural Resources. That's just political Ping-Pong—I'm sure everybody knows about it—so that person can say, "No, it's the other minister, not Natural Resources that's responsible for it being built in the parks."

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lou Rinaldi):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** When the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, Mr. Yakabuski, speaks, this Legislature clearly listens. From time to time they're provoked, and that's fine by me. There's nothing wrong with provoking people in this chamber. Sometimes it's a mere matter of waking them up.

Look, New Democrats are very much at odds, in many respects, with the Conservatives around electrical energy policy, no two ways about it. Yet at the same time, it's clear that this Bill 150 is not what so many out there would have wanted it to be.

Fifty thousand jobs—horse feathers. That number was plucked out of the air. It's as arbitrary a number as could ever have been selected—on a good day, maybe 50,000 people doing those audits.

My neighbours and I live in 100-year-old houses with wood sash frames and everything that's characteristic of a 100-year-old house. You don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows. I don't need an auditor to tell me—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** —that old sash-hung windows with the—because it was beautiful. I'm only the second owner of this house. The old woman who sold it to me had been born there, and so it was still in her father's name, because she inherited it. I know what the problem is with my house. I don't need an auditor coming to tell me. Like Mr. Marchese says, if I go near one of those windows on a cold, blustery winter day, I know exactly what the problem is.

Mr. Marchese of Trinity–Spadina is going to be speaking to this bill in short order. I suggest that folks would be well advised to listen to him.



**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lou Rinaldi):** The member from Renfrew–Nipissing has two minutes to respond, please.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I appreciate the comments from the members from Trinity–Spadina, Etobicoke–Lakeshore, Oshawa and Welland for their input on my address earlier.

I'm not going to get into any more details at this point because I only have a little bit of time left, but I want to reiterate the fact that when Tories and New Democrats are clearly seeing deficiencies of the same kind in a government bill—and the members for Trinity–Spadina and Welland talked about that—it's obvious that there's work to be done on this bill. Therefore, I would implore the members on the other side of the House—and I know you're hearing about it, too. You have reservations about this bill. You have concerns. Your constituents have concerns. You have some real fears about what this might mean to people in the province of Ontario.

This is not a renewable energy bill. This is so much broader and so far-reaching and gives so much unfettered power to a single minister that it is something that all members, of all parties, of all stripes, should be concerned about. We cannot simply allow this to be passed without serious debate, significant committees throughout the province, so that we get it right.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lou Rinaldi):** Further debate?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I have to say I was really looking forward to this opportunity to speak to Bill 150.

You look at the objectives of the bill, and you think it's really good. You look at the fact that we need to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions in order to minimize the already damaging effects of climate change, and you say, "Yes, whatever is in this bill that does that is good." We urgently need to increase the proportion of Ontario's electricity that is provided by safe and clean renewable energy—and you say, "Yes, we do." We need to expand and maximize energy conservation in the province; the minister says, "We agree with them, yes." And we urgently need to support the development of a green economy in Ontario that provides decent jobs for the future. Yes, of course we agree with that.

Bill 150 calls for government investment to upgrade the electricity transmission and distribution grid to support a greater proportion of renewable energy. We think it's good. The bill aims to create a culture of conservation by greening public buildings, improving energy efficiency standards for appliances and making energy efficiency a priority of the Building Code. It sounds great. Bill 150 seeks to ensure that renewable energy projects are environmentally sound but don't take years to get off the ground. We agree with that too.

1620

The government says the act will spark the development of a vibrant and growing green economy in Ontario. That sounds good. But apart from the good words and the lofty goals, the question is begged: Will this act actually stimulate the kind of green energy transformation that

our province so desperately needs, for both economic and environmental reasons? I don't believe the bill does that.

The government said the other day, through the minister, "With this single bold move, Ontario would join the ranks of global green power leaders like Denmark, Germany and Spain." You look at that and you say, "My God, this is amazing stuff," but this bill doesn't do anything that compares to what any of those countries are doing. If you look at Germany, they produce 24,000 or 25,000 megawatts of wind power alone. Do you understand? This is huge wind power: 24,000 megawatts. The minister compares this little initiative to what Germany is doing. The minister says it will put us into the ranks with these other nations. It doesn't do it. It can't do it.

Germany, by next year, will produce 5,000 megawatts of solar power—5,000 megawatts of solar power alone. At best, with all of these suggestions, you will be producing 500 megawatts of power every year for the next 16 years, and you want to join the ranks of the big nations? It's laughable when you say those things.

I heard the former Minister of the Environment saying the same thing but a couple of minutes ago, that we're going to join the other great nations with this initiative. Either she doesn't know what she's talking about, or she's perpetuating a myth around what it is that you purport to do. Either way, it's wrong. You're not doing that.

In fact, there are no targets. There are no timelines. There are no minimums in terms of what you want to accomplish. There's nothing in the bill that talks about what, at minimum, you want to accomplish and by when. There's nothing of the sort in the bill, but the minister was very clear. He said that 75% of power comes and will come from two sources: hydroelectric, which we support, and nuclear, against which New Democrats take a strong position.

There are caps, and those caps are clearly articulated by the Liberals and the Tories. Tories are big lovers of nuclear, too. They just won't say it out loud too often—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Oh no, we say it loud.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** —but they love nuclear, too. So there is a cap, and that was strongly and clearly articulated by Monsieur Smitherman, but in terms of how much energy we're going to be producing from wind, biomass, solar or any other generation of power, there's no comment on that. There's no comment on geothermal energy at all, no comment on it at all that I could see in the bill, unless Liberals know something about this that I haven't seen. No comment on that, either.

So in terms of how far we want to go, how much we want to accomplish and what are the timelines and the targets, there's no talk of it, but there are targets for nuclear. Fifty per cent of the energy will come from nuclear. That is very clear. I, as a New Democrat, have been against nuclear for a long time. You have a whole lot of Liberals and a whole lot of Tories singing the praises of nuclear. You've got a whole lot of Liberals and a whole lot of Tories, including the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke—and he's tall enough to be able to reach that far—singing the praises of nuclear.



God bless him. He's not ashamed; he's not shy. Neither are the Liberals. They say it's clean. There's nothing clean about the waste-producing energy that comes from nuclear. We've got two chemicals that destroy human life, tritium and plutonium, and those come as a result of mining—so much of what produces this incredibly wasteful radioactive material, that lasts 10,000 years, if not longer. No Liberal or Tory knows what to do with that waste. No Liberal or Tory ever talks about nuclear waste as being dirty. They think it's clean. They smile as they speak about it, as if somehow they're safe, and there's never going to be a problem with what happens to that nuclear waste. It's being stored in bins; we don't even know where they are. Maybe some Liberals know where they are; maybe they'll tell me where they are. If that doesn't pose a risk to anyone, please articulate it for me.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Attorney General, stand up and do your two minutes. Do 20, for God's sake, because you have so much to say. Stand up and do 20 on this. If you know where they are, stand up and speak to it. I don't think you have a clue, quite frankly. I don't think 99.9% of you have a clue where it is, because I don't. All I know is that nuclear waste is not clean, Minister Attorney General. You know too, but you all have to sort of be like parrots, simply saying whatever the industry and others tell you: "Oh, it's just clean energy." Even the Toronto Star supports you and says it's clean energy.

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell:** They understand.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Yeah, they understand.

It's dangerous stuff. It kills. The production of it is very, very polluting. And the expense of nuclear—we are still paying for Darlington today. It's expensive. No Liberal or Tory talks about how expensive it is. With all the billions of dollars we put into Darlington, and the \$40 billion these Liberals and Tories want to put into the development of new nuclear—with all those billions, imagine what we could do if we invested it in these objectives that the minister puts forth as if somehow he really believes in it. If we took those \$40 billion that he wants to spend on nuclear, we could subsidize every homeowner who wants to put solar in his or her home. We could literally pay it, for free, pay them to do it.

A constituent of mine who was talking to me just the other day said, "I put in \$40,000 worth of solar panels. Is the government doing anything to support people like me?" I said, "I'm sorry. There's nothing for you."

How many people with money, who want to do the right thing and want to put solar in their homes—they could be doing it if these fine Liberals would just support them. If they diverted but a small amount of those dollars that are going to go to nuclear and had every building, every owner who owns a building, every household person who owns a home, everyone who owns any piece of property anywhere who says, "I want to go solar, to reduce my footprint. Will you help me?"—if the government diverted but a pittance of those \$40 billion, it could be done.

You've got Tories and Liberals saying, "Yeah, yeah, some of this new energy is going to cost money," especially the Tories, and the Liberals say it too, but no one says that nuclear is even more expensive than these other, alternate forms that are cleaner.

The Ontario Power Authority said that 34,500 megawatts of power, of offshore wind, exists to be harnessed. That's a lot of wind power that could be harnessed. There's a lot of solar power that could be harnessed.

We are running out of oil, natural gas is a diminishing resource, and they're polluting. These are the other forms of alternate energy we need to look at. We are fossilized in the view that only nuclear can help us deal with our energy problems. Liberals and Tories have a fossilized view of this, and they cannot think otherwise. They don't know how to think differently. They believe nuclear is indispensable, and that is the framework they use and cannot change.

1630

I was surprised the other day when I read letters to the editor, because the Toronto Star allowed many of the critics of nuclear to write their opinions around it, and the very people who think that nuclear is clean allowed these individual people to say the following on nuclear:

"Nuclear generation is not a zero greenhouse gas emissions option as stated in your editorial. It is not clean and green. Mining and processing uranium contaminates air and water. Concrete, of which copious quantities are used to build nuclear plants, is an egregious polluter. Efficiency has never met expectations. Costs to build and maintain plants have always exceeded estimates (by many billions). And the disposal of radioactive waste is not incorporated into the equation." No one has ever incorporated radioactive disposal and how we deal with it into the financial equation.

"Most articles on renewables focus on wind and solar but neglect micro/mini hydro generation. There are hundreds of appropriate dams and waterways throughout the province that can be harnessed with minimal environmental impact. Hydro in all its configurations has always provided reliable and relatively inexpensive electricity.

"Our economy is at a critical stage. Massive expenditures for nuclear will only compound our financial woes. Rethinking our approach to energy production is vital. Opposing it is as futile as standing on railway tracks holding up the hand to stop the train roaring down on us. It's time to step aside, grab a handle and get on board"; Gary Magwood from Belleville.

Another individual says the following:

"If Smitherman really wants to focus on green energy, then he has to stop the dinosaurs from reserving large areas of Ontario's grid for nuclear and gas. The Pembina Institute and at least five other reputable groups are trying to make Smitherman and other fossilized experts from the last century understand how to deal with peak oil and climate change. Together the groups claim to represent over six million citizens.

"I would suggest that the Star begin a series of back and forth columns between the minister, or his delegate



and a representative from one or more of the environmental groups that have been pushing the serious study called 'Renewable is Doable.' The public would surely see this as an excellent service."

Another individual says the following:

"Nuclear power can never be green. Nuclear power plants produce extremely toxic radioactive wastes such as plutonium 239, which remains radioactive for half a million years. Even though nuclear power has been operational for nearly 50 years, the nuclear industry has yet to determine how to safely dispose of this deadly material. While you bring up the cost of green energy, you neglect to mention that nuclear is also subsidized by the ratepayer. The average electricity consumer in Ontario is paying \$400 per year for past nuclear fiascos. And nuclear power is the most capital-intensive, most expensive way possible to create new jobs. A transition toward labour-intensive renewable energies and efficiency programs promises massive job gains." That's Angela Bischoff; Ontario Clean Air Alliance.

Another: "Just ask those unfortunates who live downstream from a uranium mine how green nuclear power is." That's Cameron Miller from Toronto.

"With Ontario's energy consumption falling and the nuclear industry's energy costs soaring, it's time to recognize that the nuclear industry, even in Ontario, lacks a truly viable long-term future." That's Andrew Cagney from Toronto.

"Instead of nuclear, let's please put those billions into renewable energy. It will create jobs and is a proactive investment—like our trans-Canada railway—that will put us ahead of the pack for generations to come. Create a green energy bond. Bonds got us through World War II. They could get us through this war on our environment and our future. A province-wide energy retrofit will help every citizen. It's time to think outside the box and find solutions, not to wring our hands and huddle under familiar, but outdated, old security blankets." That's Gwendolyn Kaech from Markham.

Another: "Your statement that nuclear power has 'zero greenhouse gas emissions' is simply untrue. Nuclear has major environmental impacts throughout its life cycle. Ontario has better energy options. It needs to make them the centrepiece of its future energy plans"—Mark S. Winfield.

"According to Dr. Helen Caldicott (author of Nuclear Power is Not the Answer), 'within 10 to 20 years—

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** On a point of order, Speaker: I quote standing order 23(d), which forbids reading "unnecessarily from verbatim reports of the legislative debates or any other document."

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** On a point of order, Speaker—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lou Rinaldi):** On that point of order?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I think that we're trying to engage in debate, and if it's the Liberals' intention to suppress criticism of this debate and discuss the energy policy put forward by the Liberals—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lou Rinaldi):** It's not a point of order.

I respect the member from Mississauga—Streetsville's point of order, but I believe the member was speaking on behalf of the bill that we're debating today.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Thank you, Speaker. I'm really pleased with your ruling. I thought it was a silly point of order that the member from Mississauga—Streetsville made.

I've got two minutes, and there are other individuals: Farrah Khan, the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment—I couldn't finish it in time—and Martin Gagné from Toronto also spoke about this particular issue.

We need to be able to do things differently. If the government is serious, we need to invest seriously in renewables. Renewables are easy to get on board, and fast. Nuclear is expensive, it's waste-producing, it kills, it's radioactive, and it takes 10 years to bring it on board. These other forms that we're advocating for are much cheaper, and we should be supporting every homeowner, every owner of a building who has a building with government subsidies, in order to allow them to do the right thing—and use the \$40 billion of nuclear expenditures on renewables in a way that we would be supporting homeowners and those who want to reduce their footprint, in a way that the cost is minimal, in a way that would allow people to feel good about what needs to be done to reduce our emissions and to reduce our footprint.

This bill but touches very modestly on what it is that we can do. It hardly is a beacon of what should be done, and can hardly be compared to nations like Germany that are far, far ahead of where we will be in 16 years.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lou Rinaldi):** The member from Ottawa—Orléans.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** The member for Trinity—Spadina, like the lead-off speaker from Toronto—Danforth the other day, has basically supported what is in this Green Energy Act.

I'd like to just go through some of the things. Expanding renewable energy: It's the feed-in tariff; we all realize we need some work there. As-of-right grid access: We need that. The service guarantees from LDCs and Hydro One and the IESO: We need those service guarantees. Streamlining approvals for renewable energy projects: Nobody will deny that there aren't problems throughout the province right now there.

We need a renewable energy facilitator who will work with possible producers of energy and help them, not have all the resistance that is already in there now. Streamline approvals for large transmission projects: This is extremely important. We have to get the grid ready for the new era. Remove local barriers to small-scale renewable energy projects: There's some discussion there, but certainly we have to help the people who want to produce renewable energy. Smart grid implementation: We have to get ready, to set the stage for electric cars, solar panels on roofs and distributed generation. Nobody is suggesting that we shouldn't be making this \$5-billion investment in our grid.



1640

Incentives for small-scale renewables: Absolutely. Updating Ontario's building code: Nobody has touched on that, but this is part of this. Greening Ontario government and broader public sector building facilities: We've done a good job in the past three or four years on that. We now have to get into our universities, our hospitals and our schools and help them get their buildings as efficient as possible. Establish sustainable funding for conservation: Nobody has argued about that. These are all parts of the bill. Establish mandatory electricity conservation targets.

We're on our way. This is a good bill. We're not hearing any discussion, certainly from the third party, on all those issues, and I really appreciate that support.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lou Rinaldi):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** Thank you for the opportunity to make a few comments with respect to the Green Energy Act in general, and the comments made by the member from Trinity-Spadina in particular.

Let me say from the outset that those of us in the Progressive Conservative Party are not against the concept of green energy. It's sort of a motherhood statement. Who wouldn't be—so that any criticisms that we have should not be taken as criticisms of the premise of the act that we should be investing in more green sources of energy but just with respect to some of the underlying assumptions and the methods of putting this Green Energy Act into place.

With respect to some of the comments made by the member from Trinity-Spadina, I can say—and I don't think this will come as any surprise to him—that I do not agree with some of his comments with respect to nuclear energy, because, after all, it does provide about 50% of our energy here in Ontario for now and for the foreseeable future. But what I would say is that the Green Energy Act and the green power that it contemplates haven't been put into the context of a whole energy mix for the entire province of Ontario.

For example, where does nuclear fit in? What are the plans for bringing nuclear on at a higher level in the near future? What about the coal-fired plants and the promise that was made to, first of all, close them in 2007? Now the so-called plan is to close them in 2014. We still don't know really where that stands.

So while we agree with the idea of introducing new green energy, the fact of the matter is that the sun doesn't always shine and the wind doesn't always blow. We need to know where we're going to be able to get a reliable source of power for both businesses and homes in the future if we're going to be trying to attract new investments to the province of Ontario to get our economy back on stream.

I would submit that what we have is a feel-good act that sounds good, that's really just a distraction to the fact that this government has been ignoring our economy, the disastrous shape it's in, and has no plan to deal with it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lou Rinaldi):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I told people that they should listen when the member for Trinity-Spadina speaks, Rosario Marchese. He in fact outlined the NDP's position very articulately. If there are Liberals over there that think that Mr. Marchese's comments somehow provided comfort for their weak, feckless proposal, they are sadly mistaken and indeed on the verge of being delusional.

Look, this is another PR exercise. This is like a bill that says—remember those old Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland movies, right? Back in the old days. It would be, "Come on, Mickey, let's put on a musical," and all of a sudden there would be a musical; there would be background music, and Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland would be singing and dancing, and there would be munchkins all over.

This is the same sort of thing; this is fantasy stuff; "Let's talk green." This has about as much credibility as legislation that says, "We've got it now; we're going to end poverty." Not how, why, when or where; "We're going to end poverty." And who's going to vote against that? Of course not. Don't be silly.

Like was just said, of course we all support green futures, but doing it is what New Democrats are concerned about. That's what Marchese is speaking to. That's what Peter Tabuns spoke to the other day when he did his lead. In my own inarticulate way, I'm going to do my incompetent best to speak to it as well in around a half-hour's time after the next speaker.

What I find amazing is that there are some nuts-and-bolts issues here that are part and parcel of this bill, like this \$300 audit that for some reason the government members don't want to speak to; nuts and bolts like 50,000 new jobs, which is bull spit—that's what they call it where I come from—which the Liberals don't want to speak to. I will.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lou Rinaldi):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Laurel C. Broten:** I'm pleased to add some comments to the debate and speak to a number of the issues that the member for Trinity-Spadina spoke about. I would start by saying when we have a bill as extensive and comprehensive as Bill 150, it's important in this Legislature to focus in on some of the key specifics:

- the creation of an attractive feed-in tariff regime that will entail further consultation with the OPA to design that feed-in tariff system, as appropriate, that it be done in that way;

- establish a one-stop, streamlined approvals process so that we can get those renewable energy projects that we all desire built into the grid and so that we can see this new type of energy come online;

- establish a right to connect to the electricity grid for renewable energy projects that meet the technical and regulatory requirement, which is imperative because it is no use to any of us to have a renewable energy product that stands alone in a community and doesn't connect to the grid so that that electricity can be transmitted to others who would choose to use it;

- establish, for the first time, province-wide standards for renewable energy projects;



—help local communities to build and operate their renewable energy facilities; and

—offer incentives to small-scale renewables, such as zero- or low-interest loans to assist homeowners in financing the capital costs of residential renewables, and that's a key issue that the member spoke about and said was absent.

I would encourage those in this House to pull out the act again and take a look at the detail that exists. If you do, you will then understand why leaders such as Dr. Hermann Scheer, the general chairman of the World Council for Renewable Energy, has said, "Ontario's Green Energy Act represents North America's most ambitious and far-reaching enabling legislation and will place Ontario as a world leader in renewable energy development, industrial innovation and climate protection."

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lou Rinaldi):** The member for Trinity-Spadina, two minutes to respond, please.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I was reacting to the member for Etobicoke when she earlier on said, "With this single bold move, Ontario would join the ranks of global green power leaders like Denmark, Germany and Spain," which is what the minister said, which is what she just did a second ago by quoting somebody else about how far-reaching this is. The point is that it's all puffery. It all sounds great, but because of your commitment to build new nuclear, Bill 150 is but a modest proposal on the issues of generating power from wind, solar and biomass. That's the point I make to you.

You can say all you want, including the member for Ottawa-Orléans saying I haven't spoken to all the questions he raised. I did; I spoke to all the issues he raised. The point I make to him and to his party is this is but a modest proposal. Your commitment is to nuclear. That's what you have done, and that's what you've said.

If you had said to me, "We're not building any more new nuclear plants," then I would believe that this bill would have the potential that you speak of, that the objectives you put forth are serious. But they're not serious because most of your energy will come from nuclear, and the new nuclear you're going to build, not just revamping the old ones. Do you understand what I'm saying? You can only achieve so much. There is an automatic ceiling, and you have no minimum.

I did not get a chance at all to speak to the problem of the reasonable domestic content. We're urging this government: If you're going to do something, make sure that it's 50% or 60% of domestic content requirements, as they do in Quebec and as they do in America. If Americans can do it, you can, too. "Reasonable" means up to 25%. If that's what you mean, just say it. Don't just use words like "reasonable" as though somehow they mean something.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lou Rinaldi):** Further debate?

1650

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** It's a pleasure to rise in this House and to speak to Bill 150, the Green Energy Act. At the outset would I like to commend the Minister of Energy

and Infrastructure for developing this bill and bringing it to this House.

In the past almost 130 years since the invention of current electricity, we have been burning coal and we have been pumping pollution into the air. The atmosphere around our planet, as we all know, is limited. It's time for us and for all nations around the world to stop burning coal and polluting our environment.

The main objective of this bill is exactly that. We are going to introduce and we are going to build, as much as we can, renewable energy. The member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke spoke mainly on wind energy, and the member from Trinity-Spadina spoke about nuclear energy. It appears to me that he means or he considers or he includes nuclear as a part of green energy, which I tend to agree with. When we talk about renewable energy, it's not only wind energy or nuclear we should consider; there are other types of renewable energy, such as solar, hydro, biomass, biogas, landfill gas, geothermal and also tides. So we are going to look into the utilization of all kinds of renewable energy.

But one thing we should consider is the point that the wind doesn't blow all the time and the sun doesn't shine all the time, so we have to look at other sources of energy that are reliable and we have to always make sure that our baseline energy is always there. When referring to solar or wind energy in Germany, as the member from Trinity-Spadina mentioned, there is one particular point to which one should pay attention: Germany imports enormous amounts of nuclear energy from France. That's why Germany can rely heavily on its wind and solar energy. Otherwise, they couldn't.

The other point I would like to bring to the attention of the House is that this bill is going to create 50,000 green jobs, and this is going to include research and development, manufacturing, assembling, installation workers, and service, and it's even going to include the finance sector as well.

This bill, once it is passed and implemented, is going to set a strategy for the future of energy production and energy distribution in this province. One of the important features of this bill is that it's going to increase the number of sources of energy production in this province enormously. Now we are dependent on a few power plants—nuclear or coal or hydro or gas-fired plants—but, with the introduction of this bill, our sources of energy production are going to be in the hundreds and thousands as we increase our sources of supplies. This bill, once it's passed, is going, as I said, to create a strategy for the future of energy in this province.

I'd like to share my time with the member for Huron-Bruce, please.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lou Rinaldi):** The member from Huron-Bruce.

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell:** I am very pleased to enter the debate on the Green Energy Act, Bill 150.

There certainly have been a lot of comments made from the other side of the House. One of the things I wanted to talk about for just a minute was with respect to



the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. He said that this bill wouldn't be going to committee. I know that he probably thinks that, because they sent hardly any of their bills to committee; they only sent 39% of their bills to committee. So I know that when they stand in the House, that's the first thing that comes to their mind. But I tell you, there couldn't be anything further from the truth. It will be going to committee, and I expect that the member will make sure that those comments are heard and repeated often to his constituents, because we wouldn't think it would be appropriate to do anything but.

With regard to the member from Trinity–Spadina, I do often question: What form of energy are you in favour of? I know it can't be conservation, because when they were in government, they cancelled all the conservation programs. So I stand in my place and I hear the conversations and I think, how could that be? How could the only form of energy that they would be in favour of be conservation? In fact, when they were in government they cancelled all the programs.

We know that the Green Energy Act is a very comprehensive act that will deal with the energy that will be required by the province for a number of years to come. When we hear comments like, "Well, it's just like motherhood. How could you vote against motherhood?"—but I tell you, I'm going to be watching, because I have a sneaking suspicion that some of the members from across the way are going to vote against motherhood when this bill comes up. We'll just keep a very close eye.

As you know, in my riding of Huron–Bruce we produce 25% of the total energy that is used in the province of Ontario. Since we were elected government, 434 megawatts of renewables are coming from the riding of Huron–Bruce, and I can tell you, all the members of the House, the riding of Huron–Bruce is looking to do even more business. So when we see the Green Energy Act coming forward and starting to specifically address the barriers that are affecting the growth of the renewables sector today, we celebrate it—and we're not alone in this. As all the members of the House know, I come from a rural riding. But do you know what? I just want to share a news release on behalf of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and what their position is on the Green Energy Act. I know that we often hear the members from across the way talk about the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and their comments, but this time they're silent. They didn't have a thing to say, but I'm going to share with you what this news release says, and then I think we'll know why.

"Monday's announcement by Minister George Smitherman, Energy and Infrastructure, of the Green Energy Act, is viewed by Ontario farmers as an excellent opportunity to accelerate their entry into the energy production market, says Bette Jean Crews, president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA).

"When the act is fully operational, Crews says it will 'create new opportunities for our farmers to participate

even more in Ontario's green energy revolution. Through their (increased) involvement in energy production, Ontario farmers will create new manufacturing opportunities and fuel other economic initiatives,' she says. 'OFA will work with the government to ensure necessary safeguards accompany green energy developments to preserve farmland and protect the interests of rural residents.'

"Premier McGuinty has acknowledged that making the switch from building cars to building wind turbines may not be readily acceptable"—and certainly from the opposite side of the House today we have heard some of that. "Everyone needs to recognize the modern economy is in a transition phase,' Crews observed.

"Farmers, by welcoming wind turbines, biodigesters and the production of crops used for the production of energy on their farms without reducing food supplies, have demonstrated their flexibility and desire to be part of a new economy in Ontario, Crews says.

"OFA has been calling on the province to provide new and expanded opportunities for agriculture to contribute to the economy, and 'this act moves us in that direction. We're grateful and want to work with the province to provide OFA's advice on proper land use as Ontario farmers continue to provide food, fuel, fibre and now energy sustainably,' she said."

So congratulations to the OFA. I was quite pleased to see that they understand. They also understand, in moving toward the green energy portion of it, they're also going to be very well poised to start to look at carbon pricing. Certainly, since I was elected in 2003, this is something that our communities have wanted to become involved in. They see this and they understand that in order for Ontario to continue to lead in the energy sector, this is a very important component that must be addressed. When you think about where the opportunities are in all of our communities in Ontario, this is certainly something that has worked well in other countries, and we see this as definitely moving forward. By not moving in this direction, we feel that it will leave our communities without the proper set of tools they will need in order to work with the transition in our economy.

1700

One of the things that I want to talk about for just a second—they wouldn't think it was the member from Huron–Bruce standing up if I didn't speak about nuclear. When I look at the 50% that has been established, that will be the nuclear production, we recognize that nuclear is stable; it's steady as she goes. It's not good for peaks and dips, but it's a steady power source that you can count on, and that's why it has been established as what we call the baseload.

Certainly, when we speak about nuclear waste, as many of you know, in my riding we are working on how to—we currently deal with low- and medium-level nuclear waste in my riding. We are working on furthering the increase of deposits that we will be receiving, and that's something that we are working on right now. That's for low- and medium-level waste.



The comments that have been made about the supply mix—the supply mix was introduced a couple of years ago. We understand, as all members understand, that it would have to be fine-tuned over the years. Look at what's happening with the need for energy today, how much it's dramatically shifted. Obviously, the supply mix has to shift with that. We recognize that, and the tools are in place so that that can happen.

I would not be doing my job if I did not speak to what we call CO<sub>2</sub> sequestration. I know that the members from across the way—this is something that is thrown out there, that it is in fact a possibility. As many of you know, a few of us were able to go to Washington and be part of the environmental caucus, and this is something that came up, the CO<sub>2</sub> sequestration. I know that a member from across the way was sitting in the room. It was clearly explained that day that it is a very long way away from actually being put into use, that we could sequester that much that it would be an advantage. The only bit that is done now—it's just used when it's added, the CO<sub>2</sub>, to the coal. In order to say that that would be a solution that we could do today—I think it speaks to why they continue to perpetuate what they did when they were in government. We know that coal emissions were up under the NDP, and they were also up under the Tories. Putting forward a solution that we know is not a viable solution today only perpetuates that. It's like, well, if you wait for that, things will get better that day, or if you wait for this, things will get better that day. What we have in fact are renewable energies that have been proven. They've been proven in other countries. We will go forward with those renewables.

We heard from the Ontario Federation of Agriculture about what the opportunities are in rural communities. We can talk about anaerobic digesters. We have seen a couple of anaerobic digesters that are up and working in the province of Ontario. I can tell the members of the House here that my agricultural community wants to see more of that. Quite frankly, they have just become so frustrated at all the barriers that they have faced, moving forward renewable projects; it just has become too difficult a journey for them to take, even though they understand that moving forward in an environmentally sustainable manner is the only way that ensures a bright future for them.

Bringing forward the Green Energy Act starts to speak to that. We know that we have the science in place. We know that we have the commitment in place to move forward, that there is a huge uptake of the renewables. People want to make a difference; companies want to make a difference. So we see the barriers and now they are going to be addressed and we move forward.

Just in the few minutes that I have left, I also wanted to speak to the energy audits. I know that I have heard from across the way the conversation, "But you know, when your house is drafty, you know if this and that, you put on a little sweater, you put a few slippers." I would have to say that that is specifically the type of behaviour that we need to stop. I simply can't understand. Where I

was raised, you are penny wise and pound foolish if you walk by a window that you know has a draft and you don't do anything about it. Where I come from, that's what you would be called. When you have the opportunity to receive government funding to come in and look at your home to determine what you can do to make your home more energy-efficient, not only does it affect your pocketbook; it also affects your quality of life. Quite frankly, I am a bit surprised, because I did think, coming from that member, that he was not penny wise and pound foolish. So I do encourage him to get an audit and have a look at his home.

Overall, the Green Energy Act speaks about the transformation of Ontario. It talks about what we can count on for the future of Ontario. It speaks about how we can have a sustainable environment while improving the environment, recognizing that we need jobs. And what are those jobs of the future going to look like? That's what the Green Energy Act lays down. It lays down a road map of how we're going to get there and what we are going to address as the concerns that have been raised when we started down this road a number of years ago.

I know that the members have voted against it repeatedly. When it comes forward for any environmental changes, then we see votes against. Once again, we bring forward the Green Energy Act, which is going to bring about change. It will set the stage for the future of Ontario to be able to seize the opportunities that will open up as the transition begins. We certainly have heard President Obama speak repeatedly about the opportunities of the green economy. We know in Ontario that we have the capacity to go forward, to be a part of and a great contributor to the green economy. In my mind, when I stand up to vote in favour of Bill 150, it will be that I'm ensuring that we have laid the road map of how we're going to go forward environmentally sustainably, and I know that I'm not spending my children's future, as has been done by the previous side—both sides of the House, by continuing to go in a manner that they know is not environmentally sustainable.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lou Rinaldi):** The member for Whitby—Oshawa?

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** Thank you very much for the opportunity to respond to the statements made by the members for Richmond Hill and Huron—Bruce. The member for Huron—Bruce suggests that we're going to vote against motherhood, and I would suggest that there's a major difference between an empty, hollow motherhood statement and an act with real motherhood issues that are actually being dealt with in the bill. That is something that is an entirely different matter altogether.

Secondly, with respect to comments made by the member for Richmond Hill with respect to the 50,000 jobs that are alleged to be created by this new act, I would say that whenever we ask, "How are you going to do that? Show us the basis of your calculations. What kind of jobs are going to be created by this?" what we get is just a derisive sniff by the minister, as if we're asking a stupid question. That's a real question; that's something



Ontarians want answers to. This is a major shift in policy if we're going to be entering into this kind of a field, especially with the other types of energy out there also needing attention. Fifty thousand jobs—it could be two jobs, it could be 200,000 jobs for all we know, but I would suggest that it's just been grasped out of the air. It could be any number, because they have absolutely no idea where these jobs are going to be coming from. There's certainly no idea that it's going to be anything more than maybe some green energy auditors who are going to be coming in.

1710

We've certainly received a lot of feedback from homeowners, from the real estate industry and from people who are involved in these sorts of these things, who are worried about what's going to be happening. What's the utility of having one of these audits done when you live in a old house? I also live in a century-plus home. I know what needs to be done with my home, but all I do—I don't need to completely redo it—is turn down the heat and put on a sweater. The reality is that there are houses that you're never going to be able to make as energy-efficient as you like to think could be done, I would say to the member from Huron-Bruce, by just having this energy auditor coming in.

Ontarians also can't afford that right now, because people are losing jobs by the hundreds of thousands. It's not realistic. It's a very nice statement. It makes everybody feel good, but there's nothing of any substance behind it that's going to make any real difference to people in terms of green energy jobs or really becoming more efficient in terms of energy. Again, it's just a hollow motherhood-type statement.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lou Rinaldi):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I think I've finally figured it out. I have been reflecting on it and reflecting on it, and I was worried, as so many others were, about those hundreds of thousands of jobs lost and factory after factory, mill after mill shut down—steel mills, pipe mills, paper mills. I think I understand how this is all part of Dalton McGuinty's electricity conservation program, because most of those factories that have shut down were major electricity producers. Now the government thinks that it's going to make amends by having people running around the province doing so-called energy audits.

I don't know how other people grew up here. I grew up knowing that if you want to check for leaks, you hold a match around the window frame and see where the wind's blowing in, and then you pull the frame off and you caulk it. Now we've got this wonderful new stuff, this expanding foam. You caulk around the sill plate in the basement and you insulate the roof—not the roof; you insulate the top of the ceiling. I take great pride because my house is the house with the most snow on the roof, and what that means, of course, is that I've got a well-insulated attic.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** That's very good.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** That's right.

I don't need an auditor to tell me that. Good Lord thundering Jesus. These people have this obsession with so-called quasi-experts. Bob Vila has been telling you how to do it on public television for the last 20 years. My grandmother knew how to do it, and she was illiterate.

Let's talk about 50,000 jobs—again, a number plucked out of the air. It could have been—what the heck, guys; why don't you go for 60,000? Why don't you just, all of a sudden, decide that 50,000 was an underestimate and go with 60,000, because there's no more credibility to that than there is to your 50,000 jobs.

I'm looking forward to the comments from the next Conservative, and then I'm looking forward to speaking to this myself.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lou Rinaldi):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I'd just like to read this document here, which is the energy audit done on my home, 2181 Saturn Crescent in Orléans.

The energy audits are a great way of doing this work—and this is called Bill 150. I'd like to say right now that the reason Bill 150 is there is that the energy audit really costs you \$150. You hear \$300 thrown around. It's \$150. I had it done. I paid \$300. I got my cheque back: \$150 from the province of Ontario.

The federal government, NRCan, has been working on this for 15 years. It's a great plan. There are over 15 contributions that each of the governments will make, and it all goes around the energy audit. That auditor has to come in at the final and look at it: "Have you done these things in your house? Have you improved the energy efficiency of your house? Then you can get these-many dollars." Sometimes it's \$4,000 or \$5,000 on a \$9,000 or \$10,000 retrofit. The payback is three, four or five years, and you get the benefit for the rest of your life. So these are recognized as being a great way to do conservation. It's a great way to do the education of conservation.

Obama talks about doing 100 million homes in the US. Because, really, it's conservation. It's the same as drilling for oil and finding this great amount of oil: You're saving energy. Conservation is energy number one. That's what we have to remember. So these are excellent ways of doing this. I'd just like to read from Thomas Friedman the third reason that Tories don't believe in climate change: "Conservatives ... simply refuse to accept the reality of climate change because they hate the solution—more government regulation and intervention." It is regulation, it is intervention, but it's a great way to make your house cozier, of more value, and to save energy and create jobs.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lou Rinaldi):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** In response to the pathway and the road to recovery with Barack Obama, I might add, to the two members of the Liberal Party, that they've entered this province onto a slippery slope. I don't need to remind them that their economic track record has taken this province from being the first in economic growth to the worst in Canada, and thanks to them, we're now accepting have-not equalization payments.



But let's get back to their energy home audit, this \$300 tax that is going to be faced by all homeowners as a result of this legislation. If Ontarians want to know the real picture, which they will, because this party intends on painting it for them, they could listen to the Ontario Real Estate Association:

"Gerry Weir, president of OREA, 'warned the audits could end up costing sellers thousands.

"It's not the initial cost of these audits that concerns us,' Weir said in a release. 'These audits will be used by homebuyers as bargaining chips to significantly reduce the final selling price.'

"Weir said there are no standards or regulations for energy audits in the province today. Without those standards, the result of an energy audit would be meaningless.

"The audit could see trivial matters, such as improperly insulated windows, give a homebuyer the opportunity to request \$10,000 or more off the asking price of a home by claiming they need to install new windows before they move in."

I'll leave you with this:

"Today's economic downturn is a terrible time to introduce this measure. Home sellers are already worried about lost equity in their homes,' said Weir. 'A move like this, which will reduce their value even further, will not help them in any way.'"

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lou Rinaldi):** The member from Huron-Bruce has two minutes to respond.

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell:** I want to thank the speakers from Whitby-Oshawa, Welland, Ottawa-Orléans and Nepean-Carleton. I sincerely thank you for your comments.

I just want to reinforce that there will be committee hearings. The public will have the ability to speak to this bill. What I want to know today is, can we count on the members from across the way? Will they vote in favour of Bill 150? I want to know whether or not they are going to stand for the environment or if, once again, they will vote against the environment.

I have to say to the member from Nepean-Carleton that to stand and give us on this side of the House a lecture is just a little too rich. We know that if previous governments had invested in our electrical system, if they had made the necessary upgrades, if they had made the conversions and altered the supply mix, we would not be having as much to do within Bill 150. They will stand in this House and say they contributed to renewables. I can tell you that they're in my riding; there are four or five of them, and it's such a joke that Rick Mercer commented on it. He said, "Do you know why they call it Hydro One? Because they have one turbine."

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lou Rinaldi):** Further debate?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I appreciate the 20 minutes to speak to Bill 150. It's got a number of titles. If you take a look at the back of this very large piece of legislation, it's titled the Green Energy and Green Economy Act. The

long title talks about building a green economy, and that's a bit of a stretch, because 85% of Canada's energy does come from fossil fuel: natural gas, coal and oil. There's a long title, of course, An Act to enact the Green Energy Act, 2009 and to build a green—it's quite a long title; I'm not going to read the rest of that one.

1720

You turn the page in this legislation, and there's a third title. I've never noticed this in legislation before. Under the explanatory note, there's a third title: "The bill enacts the Green Energy Act, 2009"—there's no mention of green economy. That's going to have to be changed in committee, and the sooner we get at that, the better. That's confusing. There is a fourth title that's been bandied about: the green power grab, the green tax grab act, 2009, and before we're finished, this piece of legislation will have a number of other handles.

It goes on to amend, we heard this afternoon, 15 pieces of legislation and counting. I think if you count, there are probably 20 pieces of legislation that will be changed: the Electricity Act, obviously, the Energy Act, the Building Code Act and the Planning Act.

We heard mention, just recently, of President Obama. Clearly, Mr. McGuinty is attempting to hit the ground running, to try and out-Obama President Obama on energy. However, we know that there are some differences. Mr. McGuinty remains unconvinced with respect to President Obama's clarion call for clean coal. Our Canadian government has indicated they continue to work on clean coal and will work on clean coal in conjunction with the US government, which makes sense because North America is known as the Saudi Arabia of coal. I will remind those opposite, you didn't close those plants in 2007. They're still running and they're still dirty.

The proposed Green Energy Act talks about housing. It talks about the building code. It's an act with respect to sunshine, with respect to wind and with respect to what's labelled as an incentive. This incentive is titled "mandatory home energy audits to be done before the house is sold." OREA, the Ontario Real Estate Association, as we know, takes a very dim view of mandatory home energy audits and how they will skew the marketplace to the detriment of seniors, first-time homebuyers and low-income people. I don't see the incentive here. I don't see the carrot. It's obviously more of a stick, but perhaps we will see some money grants down the way.

So we're debating a bill to build a green economy. I do wish to talk a bit about some of my work. A number of years ago, I built my own home with my father and my son, and I built a passive solar home, sheltered from the wind. I'm suggesting, "Do as I do, not as I say." I know the member for Welland made mention of snow on the roof. I think he was referring to his house. We know there's fire down below, but he was referring to snow on the roof.

Before I built my house, I took over my grandfather's farm in 1976, and I lived up there in a small 1830s-style house, 20 by 30; that was the building code of the day, if



you wished to receive a land grant. I had a wood stove. That was it. I spent a lot of time looking at snow and where the frost would lie with respect to the topography. I very clearly made note of where the sun rises and sets depending on the season, which way the wind blows and in what direction, depending, again, on summer or winter. I had spent a couple of years teaching environmental science, so I had an interest, pulled up lots of books and launched on essentially my dream to build my own home.

But I learned a lot from that old 1830s house. It was known as the Lampkin house. The Lampkin family took over that land in 1830. It was a military grant before that. My family purchased it 100 years later, in 1930. The house was 20 by 30. The long side, the 30-foot side, faced due south; one door and two very large windows faced south. The narrow end of the house faced into the prevailing west wind, and from maps and from at least one existing tree, I know that the orchard was on the west side. I also assume that was not only to provide apples and pasture for sheep, but also to shield that house from the wind.

A number of years later, I could determine that they built the summer kitchen straight to the north with a root cellar underneath. In the summer that root cellar was very cool; my dog always slept down there. Interestingly enough, I learned in winter—and we had some very cold winters back in the 1970s when I was living up on that hill—my dog also slept in that root cellar because it was sheltered. The summer kitchen had a door to the west and a door to the east. You'd open both doors in the summer and you'd get this beautiful breeze. In our part of the country just north of Lake Erie, our winds are prevailing southwest; in the winter, much stronger, of course, and due west.

Another thing about that property: In a particular chunk there are 50 acres covered in black locust. Those black locust were brought up by the pioneers and planted because they grow very fast and they provide an excellent source of firewood.

All of this was done on that particular property, and I've been living up there, as I say, since 1976. I studied the history. All of that was accomplished not through any mandatory audit, no home energy audit required. It was really a survival thing. You depended on woollen clothing; your only source of heat was wood, using an axe, a saw. When the house was first built, I'm almost positive there was no wood stove. It depended on a fireplace, a very large Count Rumford fireplace that was used when the land was cleared, including much of the stumps would have gone through that fireplace. When I disc up soybean ground in the springtime in our south field, I can see a very, very large black area in the soil. It would be about the size of this chamber. That's where all the logs and trees were piled over perhaps 10 or 15 years to be burned off.

So I had eight or 10 years to study the lay of the land, as I mentioned, to study where the sun comes up, the wind direction, summer and winter. It's on the side of a

hill. I could determine where the frost would settle, where the cold areas were, and I also made notice of the snowdrifts. I felt that was very important. Whether this would be accomplished through an energy audit—and I know many of us perhaps think of houses being built on a street in town or in a subdivision, but there are many, many other very complex factors when one is laying out a farm or buildings on a farm or building a house, and the first thing you do, in my view, if you're making any plans at all, is you plant trees: coniferous trees on the windward side, deciduous trees to the south. You do not want very tall coniferous—spruce, for example—on the south side of your house: You'll be in the shade, and you can feel that.

So I set up a bit of a plan for an energy-efficient house. Again, I was thinking far beyond cracks in the doors and windows and far beyond insulation, although I used two-by-sixes. That was not the building code of the day, but I wanted to get the maximum fibreglass pink in between those studs. I also strapped the exterior with two-by-twos and laid two-inch SM—this is the closed-cell blue insulation. It was something I could do; I had the time. I wasn't spending my money on anything else at the time. I just had an interest, and there was no mandatory requirement for me to do any of this. I don't expect everybody, first of all, to build their own house or to know how to build a house. Secondly, I don't expect people to put these kinds of resources into energy efficiency.

#### 1730

One of the first decisions my wife and I made: When we dug footings when we excavated, we dug into the side of the hill. As for that old 1830s house—and that 1830s house is still on the property; I don't throw things away—I jacked it up and moved it back 100 yards. We oriented our house lengthways, not so much facing south; we decided to have the long side of our house facing south-southeast. The reason for that: When you live down near Lake Erie, in the wintertime when you want that sun, you get sun until noon, and then because of the lake, it clouds up. So I decided not to face south but to face south-southeast. If someone did an energy audit on my home, I would hope that they would take that factor into recognition because it's not as simple as just orienting your windows south.

Eighty-five per cent of the glass in the house faces south-southeast. We designed the house with only two windows that face north and two small windows that face west, into the prevailing wind. It's a relatively large house: about 3,600 square feet. This is the danger when you build your own house: It's hard to stop. However, no basement; we felt no need for a basement. Because we dug into the side of the hill, our main living area, the main floor, essentially would be considered a basement or a walk-out basement. We didn't build on top of the hill. We built partway down the hill on the east and the south side to shelter us from the wind and to access that sunshine. Again, would an inspector give me points for that? I'm not sure.



There are two concrete walls to this house: on the north side and on the west side, into the side of the hill; hence, no windows on the main floor. We poured concrete wide enough for two-by-sixes—not two-by-fours; two-by-sixes—again to accommodate that fibreglass pink.

Code of the day—I'm not even sure if it required insulation on the inside of a concrete wall. Of course, we insulated the inside, but I also made a decision to insulate the exterior of the concrete, again using this blue SM, this closed-cell insulation material that could handle the weight of the earth as I backfilled. Again, whether I would get credit on an energy audit for all of that insulation on the outside of my concrete walls, I'm not sure. I don't know whether the government or bureaucracy or paperwork can accommodate these kinds of factors.

We poured footings and laid down gravel. One thing that my wife and I did: Before we poured the concrete floor, we tamped it down. As I say, we did most of this ourselves, although I did not pour the concrete. We laid down sheets of two-inch SM on all the floor areas, primarily on the south side of the house, where I knew that that winter sun would hit the concrete floor, which I subsequently covered with tile, the reason being that I wanted to use that winter sun—again, my goal was passive solar—to somewhat heat the floor in the morning.

Further to that, I felt that heat storage was so important in this home that I used the model of a Russian fireplace, which is a massive pile of stone and masonry. We poured very large footings to accommodate a very large chimney system in the centre of the home and then I poured a gigantic concrete box within the centre of the home, with spaces for a fireplace and a space for a wood stove. The forced-air heating system was part of that wood stove structure. Again, I don't know whether these forms that are being proposed are going to accommodate these kinds of factors.

At about that time, the municipality decided to tear down my one-room public school just up the road. We purchased 10,000 bricks and recycled the bricks. Those bricks were laid in 1916, when the mortar was sand mortar. So my wife cleaned 10,000 bricks. It's fairly easily done; it's not like the mortar today. You can't get the mortar—

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Your wife cleaned the bricks? What did you do?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** My wife cleaned all the bricks, all 10,000. Her shoulders were bigger than mine at the end of that project.

I notice that on many houses they put the bricks on the outside of the house for whatever reason. In our system, we put 10,000 bricks inside the house as a heat sink, laid the bricks around this gigantic concrete box that has the wood stove—my source of heat—and then I filled the cavern with just about every piece of farm machinery I could find on the farm: plowshares, cast iron, anything that would absorb heat. Again, would an energy audit pick up on some of these factors?

I did allow myself the luxury of rebuilding that Count Rumford fireplace that still remains in the old house. I rebuilt that one as well.

I just want to stress, before anybody even thinks of building a house—now, whether this would come up in this government paperwork audit—to plant the trees first. Determine where the wind is coming from and don't plant coniferous trees in front of your house; that will shade them. Don't plant them in front of your neighbour's house; you're going to block his sun. Don't put a high-rise building in front of your neighbour's house if he's aspiring to put solar panels on the south-facing incline of his roof. Check the angle of your sun; sunshine is so important. And I do want to stress—we built the second floor garrison-style. I extended the second floor about four feet out to the south and then built a roof angle. That blocks the summer sun. I don't have air conditioning in this home. We've been in it since the mid-1980s. We don't need air conditioning, but the angle allows that low winter sun, again, to come in, to warm up my insulated concrete floor, and to warm up a lot of those 10,000 bricks I was talking about.

Cloud patterns are very important if you're designing an energy-efficient house. Orient your windows to where the sun is and try and determine what time of day the clouds come up.

Wind direction is very important, not only for winter-time, but also for cooling. I mentioned the pioneer house. As I recall, the summer kitchen goes north. You've got a west door and an east door; it's open in the summer to let that breeze go through.

Be very cognizant of the soil types, the topography, the lay of your land. I don't have a sump pump, for example, because I'm partway down a hill. I use the Big "O" for drainage, and in the spring and the fall, those cold winter days, the cold air moves down. The frost is below the house.

Always have your front door facing south. In my view, it's handy for firewood, warms up that front entrance, and you can pile your firewood there and your sidewalk remains frost-free. Again, I hope the energy audit would pick this up. If the main door faces north, it's going to be snowed in. The laneway will probably be on the north side, and that will be snowed in, and you're going to expend more energy with hiring a guy to come in to clear it out. I don't know whether this is going to be covered by this legislation or not.

Before you build, collect those building materials. Recycle. I spent probably 15 years collecting doors at yard sales and auto wreckers: Triple M—I've been in and out of all of them. Get a hold of those old cast-iron grates; haul them out of buildings for your cold-air returns. Buy a used truck, maybe two trucks, and a tractor. Scrounge the windows, again, for inside windows. And again, the doors are inside doors. Recycle lumber; tear down a couple of barns and get some good barn beams. Make sure you've got a real good wood stove.

As far as these bureaucrats that designed this form, think about sunshine and think about the wind. Thank you very much.



**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lou Rinaldi):** Thank you.

Pursuant to standing order 47(c), six and a half hours of debate on this bill having occurred, I am now required to deem this debate adjourned unless the House leader indicates otherwise. House leader?

1740

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** We're prepared to let the debate continue.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lou Rinaldi):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** That was a truly remarkable and informative 20 minutes. It's a side of the member from Haldimand-Norfolk that I simply wasn't aware of. I think his comments are very, very important.

Look, all the audits in the world won't change energy consumption. It's not like a safety check when you're selling a car—because, you see, you can't convey ownership in a car without the safety check being provided. In other words, an unsafe car can't be sold as a car that's driveable.

I don't agree with OREA's rather panicky reaction, because any astute homebuyer, when they see old single-pane windows, is going to say, "Well, you know, this really should be upgraded to double-pane or triple-pane," and use that as a negotiating point.

This treatment of audits as a panacea, as something of a diversion, is particularly bothersome.

I'm going to have a chance to speak to this bill in a little bit of time.

Folks down where I come from have a lot of old housing, a lot of wartime housing. Trust me, they'd love to get new windows installed. They'd love to get high-efficiency furnaces, rather than their old mid-efficiency furnaces. But they all just lost their jobs at John Deere. They lost their jobs at Atlas Steel. They lost their jobs at Welland Tubes. They lost their jobs at Ferranti-Packard in St. Catharines. They lost their jobs up at the canning factory up in north Niagara. An audit is not going to tell them anything they don't already know. They know that those single-pane windows are drafty and not energy efficient, but they don't have the jobs that are going to enable them to pay for the refenestration of that house.

I'm looking forward to speaking to this in short order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lou Rinaldi):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde:** I too want to add comments to this debate.

Let me tell you, no one should criticize this bill, because we want protection for the consumer and we want to plan for future generations.

The previous government never, ever looked to the future for our needs in electricity. I remember way back when we were in opposition, we said to the government, "Are you planning for the future? Are you doing anything for the needs of the future?"

**Interjection:** No, they didn't.

**Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde:** They never did.

I remember in December 2002, when the previous government was trying to sell Ontario Hydro, we had to pay \$1.33 a kilowatt hour. We had to purchase the

electricity. We had an agreement with Quebec Hydro. They cancelled the agreement for 1,250 megawatts.

The third party—we had an agreement with Manitoba. They cancelled the agreement, and today we have to spend all that money for the future of our people.

The audits would be protection for the consumers, because when you want to purchase a house, first you go to city hall and you look at what they're paying in taxes, what they're paying for electricity, what they're paying for water, and this time we will make sure that the new buyer will know if there's heat loss in the house. The purpose of having the audits is the protection of our consumers.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lou Rinaldi):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Bill 150 will remove all oversight of wind turbines from the municipalities, and I have a lot of concerns with that, because as many of you will know, Dufferin county has hosted a number of turbines in Ontario and is participating in renewable energy in our province to a large degree—but important details, such as what the setback should be from homes to a turbine, are all being left to regulation.

We're supposed to trust the Minister of Energy and believe that after we've discussed and debated Bill 150, he's going to set the regulatory changes and the setbacks and we need to trust him. Well, if there's one thing that I've learned in a year and a half—I can't trust anything that the Liberal government is saying and doing, and I would like to have specific details so that we can debate those issues here in the Legislative chamber.

The municipalities in Dufferin-Caledon, like Mulmur, Caledon, East Garafraxa and Amaranth, have all done very detailed planning and community engagement where they have talked about how they can incorporate renewable energy into their municipality while still keeping their municipality unique. They are not saying, "We're going to do a planning document that bans renewable energy"; they're saying, "Let's incorporate it into what our community is and what our community stands for." Bill 150, the way it's set out right now, is going to remove that ability from the municipality completely.

I've heard from almost all of my municipalities in Dufferin-Caledon saying that they resent this intrusion on municipal planning and they resent the fact that the Liberals are assuming the municipalities are incapable of planning for their future in renewables.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lou Rinaldi):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I thought the member from Haldimand-Norfolk really made a valuable contribution to the debate. Too bad his colleague from Wellington wasn't listening to him and didn't comment on it. I think he made some great suggestions. I wish he had listened.

He really hit the essence of this bill, and that is trying to change the mindset, the paradigm in terms of how we build our homes, how we use energy, how we conserve energy. Obviously he's put a lot of thought into this, going back a long time, and how he built his home with



the sheltered north face into the side of the hill rather than building it on top where you're exposed to all this wind and energy loss. I really think that that type of thinking is what we need. It's not the old thinking, like the member from Dufferin up there, who thinks the old way; we need the new way of thinking.

In some ways it's going back to what our forefathers did, where they didn't have unlimited amounts of energy and they had to do a lot of work to chop all that wood to heat their homes. So they looked at the natural environment—as the member said, the sun lines and the direction of the wind and the local temperatures, the local environment. As a result of that, he's come up with an energy-efficient home that conserves and saves energy rather than just building the old way like the member from Dufferin there; she just wants to bulldoze and build and build. "Stop and think," he's saying. Listen to your own member. He has stopped, he has thought about this and he's done something that we should all be doing, and that is looking ahead as we learn from the past because we can do things more efficiently. We can't keep building all this energy capacity, but we can conserve what we have by doing things smartly. I commend him for doing it and for sharing that with us; it was really appreciated, what he did.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lou Rinaldi):** The member from Haldimand-Norfolk has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I think part of my point, and I know that we here as legislators—and a number of MPPs have been here for a number of years—why are we here? Much of our role in this debate is to create new legislation and to create new regulation, and oftentimes when you have that power or when you have that hammer, every problem looks like a nail. When we try and address issues or as this bill is designed—and I heard this in a government briefing this morning—it's designed to drive behaviour. That doesn't work with many people. It doesn't work with me. I find that I do seem to get my back up.

I want to reiterate the incredible power of not only information but education. When I began my researches in the 1960s—and I had the advantage of teaching the subject for a few years—there was no Internet. I purchased a large number of paperback books. I went through these books, and I can tell you that in every book that I read, 100 or 150 pages, there would really only be one idea in the whole book that was worth using. Most of it is garbage and theory—people who perhaps have never built a house but they'll write a book on how to build a passive-solar house or an energy-efficient house.

My point is that, not only in our school system, we have tremendous access to knowledge and information and ideas. Let's not rely solely on laws and regulation and paperwork to achieve some of these laudable goals.

750

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lou Rinaldi):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** New Democrats have been very clear about our passion for finding new sources of

energy, renewable energy sources; about our passion about dirty electricity production, and our concern about that.

Once again, the energy audit will, in most instances, tell people what they already know, either based on their experience living in that home or, after a thorough inspection of that home, if they're a purchaser. We know the fundamentals. Come on. But it's not going to address the conservation issue or the greening issue because there's nothing about an energy audit that says that there's going to be the work done or the investment made in that house to improve its energy efficiency; as simple as that.

The second observation is that increasing numbers of Ontarians, most of whom want more energy-efficient homes—nobody likes paying electricity bills and natural gas bills and propane bills. Most Ontarians, after having lost jobs and after having seen their savings destroyed in this Enron-Bernie Madoff world—you know what I'm talking about, don't you? People who have worked hard all their lives to save up a few bucks and were persuaded by their bank investment advisers to put it in mutual funds—thanks, pal—people in their 60s, 70s, 80s—they'd dearly love to refenestrate their house. They'd dearly love to install a high-efficiency furnace. They'd dearly love to increase the insulation in the attic. But they just got ripped off by a financial services sector that has run wild, cowboy style, and the younger ones have just lost their jobs and their sources of income.

What I find interesting—Surely one of the great legacies Howard Hampton's leaving here as leader of the NDP has been his compelling and persistent advocacy for energy conservation, pointing out, over and over and over again, that the two biggest electricity consumers in your house are the furnace motor and the refrigerator. There is new furnace motor technology that, in and of itself, makes that motor far more efficient, and as we know, newer refrigerators, in and of themselves, consume far less electricity.

Mind you, consumers are getting ripped off left and right. I just read Consumer Reports, where the refrigerators—they call them these French-door refrigerators; double doors on top and a freezer on the bottom, the least efficient of all refrigerators, yet somehow, somebody has decided that these are stylish. The most efficient refrigerator is still the freezer on top and the single door. Forget the ice cube dispenser.

It's not that any of us want to begrudge the people who can afford to buy these things the right to buy them, but these are the big electricity consumers: furnace motors and refrigerators. Consumer Reports just revealed that LG, which makes its own refrigerator and also makes the Kenmore Trio model, got its knuckles rapped for misleading consumers about the energy guide rating of those refrigerators.

The legislation talks about some monitoring of appliances. Where's the testing facility? The government should tell us now. If it's going to ban certain types of appliances in Ontario—heck, you think outlaw cigarettes out of the smoke shacks is a problem? Just wait until you



see the transport trucks importing hot refrigerators. How ironic.

I find it of some concern that, notwithstanding that Hampton has repeated over and over again that those are the two biggest single electricity users, the government doesn't, in a more focused way, specifically speak to those two electrical motors in almost every home in the province. There was a time in this province, in the last century—nobody here is old enough to recall it; I know it for a fact, though—when the province converted from 25-cycle to 60-cycle, when Ontario Hydro changed every electrical motor in the province as a service to the consumer—every power saw, every furnace motor. Every motor in the province was replaced with a 60-cycle motor.

My folks down where I come from dearly want to create a greener planet, I think, like people across this province, but they're being told or it has been suggested that they do things that don't address the issue, like paying more for electricity.

I'm a fan of wind-produced electricity. The first time I saw it—other than the Jack Layton windmill over here at the Exhibition grounds—I was driving from Las Vegas to Los Angeles a few years ago. I was driving across the desert and all of a sudden I saw this huge—it was like a science fiction movie, with acre after acre after acre of windmills. I thought it was quite fascinating and indeed attractive. There was an artistic quality to it.

Yet I've got to speak for my folks, who have serious concerns about wind farms, as they're called, adjacent to residential properties. I've got a good constituent, a good person, Tom Briggs down in Wainfleet, who is very, very concerned about the wind farm proposal for Wainfleet. He understands. He likes clean energy, as well. He's proposing that there should be no wind farm closer than 1.5 kilometres. He has collected a whole lot of research and done his Internet research. I'll be speaking to him when I go down to the ratepayers' association meeting in Wainfleet on March 28. I got that contact with him and heard what he had to say, and again, I wasn't sure until I read—did you read the op-ed piece that appeared in a number of papers, "An Open Letter to Mr. Dalton McGuinty," from Barbara Ashbee Lormand and Dennis Lormand from Shelburne, Ontario? They live next to windmills. Again, New Democrats support wind as a source of electrical energy, no two ways about it. The other day I heard the government talk about a 500-metre barrier between residences and windmills. Surely there are going to be people coming before this committee, and quite frankly, I hope that Barbara Lormand and Dennis Lormand do—because they talk about this persistent hum, buzz and vibration in their house. Just imagine that for a minute: persistent, always, 100%, until the wind stops blowing, even to the point where the dog is getting frantic. I have no reason to disbelieve these people.

We see nothing in this legislation that provides for environmental assessments—because there are other issues that have been raised about turbines—nothing that provides for, again, the need to protect residential

homeowners from the impact of this technology. Don't you find that a little bothersome?

I'm going to have to speed this up. I've got some time, after we come back, for the next day—50,000 jobs.

Toby Barrett's comments, as I say, were incredibly delightful. Changing our impact on the planet is all about changing lifestyles, changing culture.

I'm a big fan of the small house movement. I say that North Americans, Canadians, Ontarians, who have become accustomed to bigger and bigger houses should maybe reflect on becoming more and more thoughtful about how they build houses. If you build smaller houses, though, and I'm talking about 750- and 800-square-foot houses—we've got a whole whack of wartime houses down in Welland that are 650 square feet. Families of five, six and seven grew up in them. You go to some of the old, historic British row housing, and you see incredibly compact homes. When you build small houses, you need more public spaces. Do you understand what I'm saying? This government, with its willingness to let municipalities go bankrupt, is creating a fiscal scenario where municipalities are less and less capable of providing more public space. You need little community halls. You need parks. You need parkettes. You need playgrounds.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Pubs.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** And, as Toby Barrett says, the occasional pub, notwithstanding that you can only smoke dope in them. That's what we heard recently. You can't smoke a cigarette, but you can smoke a joint.

So we have to change the culture. Again, there's nothing about this bill and this government's approach to this issue that changes the culture in a meaningful way. "Fifty thousand jobs. Fifty thousand jobs." Horse feathers. Horse spit. That number was plucked out of thin air. There's no accounting for it whatsoever. "Oh, maybe we'll have more loans officers in banks." Oh, please. Don't be stupid. What a silly thing to say. Fifty thousand auditors auditing homes? Again, don't be silly. What a stupid thing to say. Because there's no hard Ontario/Canadian content in the production of any of the new machinery that's going to be used as alternative sources of electricity generation.

I remember Paul Miller from Hamilton up here on a daily basis saying, "Where's the Ontario content?" He's got steelworkers down in Hamilton who have lost their jobs at National Steel Car that aren't being guaranteed. This government let Ferranti-Packard shut down in St. Catharines. Smooth move, huh? Real clever. Ferranti-Packard that made transformers: an ideal manufacturing operation to be involved in wind farm projects, amongst other things.

I'm going to continue this the next time this bill's called and I've got a few more minutes' time.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lou Rinaldi):** Thank you. It now being 6 o'clock, I deem the House adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9.

*The House adjourned at 1801.*



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
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<b>Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
<b>Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
<b>Carroll, Hon. / L'hon. M. Aileen (LIB)</b>	Barrie	Minister of Culture / Ministre de la Culture
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
<b>Crozier, Bruce (LIB)</b>	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)</b>	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	Windsor–Tecumseh	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
		Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
<b>Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)</b>	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
<b>Horwath, Andrea (NDP)</b>	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
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<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
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Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Murdoch, Bill (IND)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)</b>	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)</b>	Scarborough—Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches—East York	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)</b>	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
Qadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of International Trade and Investment / Ministre du Commerce international et de l'Investissement
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London—Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland—Quinte West	
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Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
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Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
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<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)</b>	Nipissing	Minister of Tourism / Ministre du Tourisme
<b>Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	Deputy Premier / Vice-premier ministre
Sousa, Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Energy and Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Infrastructure
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton—Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga—Erindale	Minister of Small Business and Consumer Services / Ministre des Petites Entreprises et des Services aux consommateurs
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	
<b>Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Perth—Wellington	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
<b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>	Simcoe—Grey	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener—Waterloo	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	
Vacant	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	

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Peter Tabuns  
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Mario Sergio  
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Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo  
Helena Jaczek, Shafiq Qaadri  
Khalil Ramal, Peter Shurman  
Elizabeth Witmer  
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Howard Hampton, Greg Sorbara  
Norman W. Sterling, David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions / Comité  
spécial de la santé mentale et des dépendances**

Chair / Président: Kevin Daniel Flynn  
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Elliott  
Bas Balkissoon, Christine Elliott  
Kevin Daniel Flynn, France Gélinas  
Helena Jaczek, Sylvia Jones  
Jeff Leal, Liz Sandals  
Maria Van Bommel  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial



## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI

<b>Employment Standards Amendment Act (Organ Donor Leave), 2009, Bill 154, Mr. Fonseca / Loi de 2009 modifiant la Loi sur les normes d'emploi (congé pour don d'organe), projet de loi 154, M. Fonseca</b>	
First reading agreed to.....	5130

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES

<b>Organ donation</b>	
Hon. Peter Fonseca .....	5130
<b>Organ donation</b>	
Mr. Robert Bailey .....	5131
<b>Organ donation</b>	
Mr. Peter Kormos.....	5131
<b>Special report, Environmental Commissioner of Ontario</b>	
The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters).....	5131

## PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

<b>Child care</b>	
Ms. Sylvia Jones .....	5132
<b>Professional hockey franchise</b>	
Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn .....	5132
<b>Child custody</b>	
Mr. Jim Brownell .....	5132
<b>Federal-provincial fiscal policies</b>	
Mr. Mario Sergio.....	5132
<b>Electricity supply</b>	
Mr. Norm Miller .....	5133
<b>Property taxation</b>	
Mme France Gélinas .....	5133
<b>Firearms control</b>	
Mr. Mike Colle.....	5133
<b>Firearms control</b>	
Mr. Mario Sergio.....	5134
<b>Bathurst Heights Adult Learning Centre</b>	
Mr. Mike Colle.....	5134

## ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

<b>Employment Standards Amendment Act (Temporary Help Agencies), 2009, Bill 139,</b>	
--	--

## Mr. Fonseca / Loi de 2009 modifiant la Loi sur les normes d'emploi (agences de placement temporaire), projet de loi 139, M. Fonseca

Mrs. Joyce Savoline .....	5134
Mr. Peter Kormos.....	5135
Mr. Norm Miller.....	5135
Mrs. Joyce Savoline .....	5135
Mr. Peter Kormos.....	5135
Ms. Lisa MacLeod .....	5138
Mr. Rosario Marchese .....	5138
Mr. Peter Kormos.....	5139
Ms. Lisa MacLeod .....	5139
Mr. Peter Kormos.....	5141
Mr. Garfield Dunlop.....	5141
Ms. Lisa MacLeod .....	5142
Mr. Rosario Marchese .....	5142
Mr. Peter Kormos.....	5144
Ms. Sylvia Jones.....	5145
Mr. Rosario Marchese.....	5145
Second reading agreed to .....	5145
<b>Green Energy and Green Economy Act, 2009, Bill 150, Mr. Smitherman / Loi de 2009 sur l'énergie verte et l'économie verte, projet de loi 150, M. Smitherman</b>	
Mr. John Yakabuski .....	5146
Mr. Rosario Marchese.....	5153
Ms. Laurel C. Broten.....	5153
Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette.....	5154
Mr. Peter Kormos.....	5154
Mr. John Yakabuski .....	5155
Mr. Rosario Marchese.....	5155
Mr. Phil McNeely.....	5157
Mrs. Christine Elliott.....	5158
Mr. Peter Kormos.....	5158
Ms. Laurel C. Broten.....	5158
Mr. Rosario Marchese .....	5159
Mr. Reza Moridi.....	5159
Mrs. Carol Mitchell.....	5159
Mrs. Christine Elliott.....	5161
Mr. Peter Kormos.....	5162
Mr. Phil McNeely.....	5162
Ms. Lisa MacLeod .....	5162
Mrs. Carol Mitchell.....	5163
Mr. Toby Barrett .....	5163
Mr. Peter Kormos.....	5166
Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde.....	5166
Ms. Sylvia Jones.....	5166
Mr. Mike Colle.....	5166
Mr. Toby Barrett .....	5167
Mr. Peter Kormos.....	5167
Second reading debate deemed adjourned .....	5168

# CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Monday 2 March 2009 / Lundi 2 mars 2009

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Hon. Christopher Bentley.....	5117
Hon. John Wilkinson.....	5117
Mr. Peter Kormos.....	5117
The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters).....	5117

## ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

### Ontario economy

Mr. Ted Chudleigh.....	5117
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	5117

### Renewable energy and energy conservation

Mr. John Yakabuski.....	5118
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	5118
Hon. George Smitherman.....	5118

### Don jail

Mr. Howard Hampton.....	5119
Hon. Rick Bartolucci.....	5119

### Forest industry

Mr. Howard Hampton.....	5119
Hon. Donna H. Cansfield.....	5120

### Renewable energy and energy conservation

Ms. Lisa MacLeod.....	5120
Hon. George Smitherman.....	5121

### Employment supports

Mr. Paul Miller.....	5121
Hon. Michael Bryant.....	5121

### University funding

Mr. Yasir Naqvi.....	5122
Hon. John Milloy.....	5122

### Senior citizens

Mr. Peter Shurman.....	5122
Hon. George Smitherman.....	5122

### Protection for miners

Mme France Gélinas.....	5123
Hon. Peter Fonseca.....	5123

### Education funding

Mr. Khalil Ramal.....	5123
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne.....	5123

### Renewable energy and energy conservation

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer.....	5124
Hon. George Smitherman.....	5124

### University funding

Mr. Rosario Marchese.....	5125
Hon. John Milloy.....	5125

## Public transit

Mrs. Laura Albanese.....	5125
Hon. James J. Bradley.....	5125

## School calendar

Mrs. Joyce Savoline.....	5126
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne.....	5126

## Composting

Mr. Paul Miller.....	5126
Hon. John Gerretsen.....	5127

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters).....	5127
--------------------------------------	------

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

### Organ and tissue donation

Mr. Norm Miller.....	5127
----------------------	------

### Black History Month

Mr. Joe Dickson.....	5127
----------------------	------

### Health care

Mrs. Joyce Savoline.....	5127
--------------------------	------

### Family Day

Ms. Helena Jaczek.....	5128
------------------------	------

### Renewable energy and energy conservation

Mr. Garfield Dunlop.....	5128
--------------------------	------

### William Osler Health Centre

Mrs. Linda Jeffrey.....	5128
-------------------------	------

### Court facility

Mr. Bill Mauro.....	5129
---------------------	------

### Waste disposal

Mme France Gélinas.....	5129
-------------------------	------

### Environmental protection

Mr. Phil McNeely.....	5129
-----------------------	------

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES / RAPPORTS DES COMITÉS

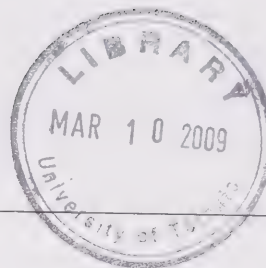
### Standing Committee on Justice Policy

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti.....	5129
Report adopted.....	5129

*Continued on inside back cover*



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## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 39<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Tuesday 3 March 2009

Mardi 3 mars 2009

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 3 March 2009

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 3 mars 2009

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by an aboriginal prayer.

*Prayers.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GREEN ENERGY AND GREEN ECONOMY ACT, 2009

### LOI DE 2009 SUR L'ÉNERGIE VERTE ET L'ÉCONOMIE VERTE

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 2, 2009, on the motion for second reading of Bill 150, An Act to enact the Green Energy Act, 2009 and to build a green economy, to repeal the Energy Conservation Leadership Act, 2006 and the Energy Efficiency Act and to amend other statutes / *Projet de loi 150, Loi édictant la Loi de 2009 sur l'énergie verte et visant à développer une économie verte, abrogeant la Loi de 2006 sur le leadership en matière de conservation de l'énergie et la Loi sur le rendement énergétique et modifiant d'autres lois.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** This is the remnant of the time allowed me that I began using yesterday evening.

I suppose, just to wrap up, I want folks to recall the very interesting comments made by the member for Haldimand-Norfolk, Toby Barrett, when he talked about conservation and green lifestyle as being a very significant commitment. That was echoed by the member for Eglinton-Lawrence, Mike Colle, when he responded and commented on Barrett's 20-minute presentation. We really do have to have a major cultural shift.

I repeat that I was very disappointed that somehow we've lost the focus here. Howard Hampton has been leading this province in explaining that if you really want to have a direct, significant impact—not some PR-spin type of impact, but a direct, significant impact—you address, from a residential homeowner's point of view, the two largest electricity users in your home, and those are your furnace motor and your refrigerator. That's something that this province could take a very direct and active role in doing: helping homeowners upgrade those two appliances, if you want to call a furnace an appliance.

The other one is the observation that audits alone aren't going to save a single kilowatt. Mere audits are not

going to save any energy at all. Most folks know full well if they've got obsolete fenestration in their homes. Most folks know full well if it's an older home that isn't properly insulated. Most folks know full well if there are drafts coming in through the baseboards. Most folks know full well if they're using a mid-efficiency furnace rather than a high-efficiency furnace. So audits aren't going to solve anything when it comes to greening this province. I reject the suggestion that somehow people, homeowners, need this audit—and Toby Barrett spoke to that very cleverly. He talked about all the hidden energy conservation things that he built into his home. He asked if he's going to get credit for that; I suspect not, because they're buried in the ground. It's the insulation under the concrete pad that constitutes the ground floor, amongst other things. All audits are going to do is make jobs for auditors.

What folks like the folks where I come from need is help, because these folks who live in homes that they know aren't as efficient as they should be are the same folks who just lost their jobs. They need help upgrading those homes so that they can live a little more economically and so that they can save a little bit of energy.

I want to go back on this 50,000 new jobs—50,000 new jobs. What horse feathers—absolute bull spit. It's made up; it's fabricated. This is Alice in Wonderland. Some spin-doctor type figured that 50,000 would be a good number so they just wrote down 50,000. The government can't explain where those 50,000 new jobs are going to happen, and all the more so when there isn't a clearly articulated Buy Ontario component in any new technology or any new hardware that's being built.

My colleague Paul Miller from Hamilton talked about the 75% of the staff at National Steel Car out of work in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario: no jobs, none whatsoever, and no prospect.

Oh, and what do Professors Martin and Florida say? "Oh, these unemployed workers in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario"—they literally said this; I was there—Professor Martin, when they were presenting this boondoggle of a \$2.2-million Martin and Florida report, said, "Oh, well, workers who lose their jobs can open beauty salons or maybe art galleries." Good God. You might as well dress up those John Deere workers in Welland—800 of them just lost their jobs—dress them up in tutus and send them down the road to the opera-ballet house and have them dance to the Nutcracker Suite. What a stupid, stupid comment to make.

These are the same workers who are being called upon by this government to green their homes. They'd love to,



but they can't afford to, because they just lost their jobs and their property taxes are going up, because this government hasn't uploaded the download from the Conservatives. Their hopes for the future are diminishing.

I'm encouraged by the fact that there's going to be some consideration of amendments to the building code. Far too many developers have built far too many high-rise buildings with electric baseboard heating. Why? Because it's cheap to install and because it's easy to put a meter in each apartment and make the consumer pay for it, so the front-end costs are very low. But the back-end costs are very, very high.

I, for one, can't understand why we wouldn't ban electric heating, especially in rental units in any new construction, unless it's in an area that doesn't have access to natural gas, which is the clear alternative. I appreciate that there are some parts of the province where electricity is the only source of energy, especially in a multi-residential building.

This government has generated some spin and tried to do some PR. It quickly proved unsuccessful. It makes up numbers like 50,000 jobs that it can't justify at all, at all, at all. Are there going to be 50,000 new auditors? Is that where the jobs are, Mr. Ramal?

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** Not really. Real jobs.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Of course not, and you know it.

The Liberals are just lining up and bowing. You know that RCA Victor ad? You're too young, but there used to be a RCA Victor ad where the dog is sitting beside the gramophone—folks here remember that—and the tag line under it was "His Master's Voice." These Liberal backbenchers are like that dog sitting in front of the gramophone just listening to his master's voice. I know what they're thinking. I can see their body language. They know that there's no substance to this legislation, that it's more fluff than body, it's more hot air than reality, and it does nothing to green Ontario.

This government's vision of a green Ontario still includes at least 50% of our electrical power coming from nuclear power plants, and not the existing nuclear power plants—new nuclear power plants. And we know this much about nukes, don't we? They're unpredictable in terms of the cost—exorbitant prices, billions and billions of dollars, and of course, when you spend billions and billions of dollars building these plants, you pass those costs on to the electricity consumer. Then, of course, there's the prospect of what you do with the waste once it's exhausted. It's dangerous and expensive. This government appears to have abandoned any sense of highly concentrated conservation programs, and I find that truly a shame.

I finally want to comment on this government's failure to acknowledge that wind farms—and we support wind as a source of electrical energy; of course we do, in the New Democratic Party—in and of their own right can constitute a nuisance for people whose homes are adjacent to them. We need clear guidelines and standards from this government about the proximity of wind farms to residential homes. This government is prepared to

inflict the persistent vibration and noise, along with the prospect of some other environmental impacts, on people willy-nilly in their mad rush to try to demonstrate themselves as somehow being greener than anybody else, because that's all it is. It's all about imagery; it's all about spin. It's not about substance. They're not green. They're addicted to nukes and they have no interest, there's nothing in this legislation whatsoever that will facilitate, accommodate, encourage or assist in real, radical conservation, which is the first step that has to be taken.

**0910**

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Laurel C. Broten:** Good morning. It's a pleasure to have a chance to share with this House, in response to the member from Welland's comments, some more detailed information about the analysis that we have done with respect to the creation of jobs arising from the Green Energy Act. It is of critical importance to the government that the Green Energy Act be one that helps our province transform our energy system but also protects our climate and, very importantly in the economic climate that exists, creates jobs. By 2012, investments of \$5 billion are expected to support over 50,000 direct and indirect jobs.

Let me just share with the Legislature how we calculated the job figures. We calculated those job figures using information from the Ontario Power Authority with respect to the projections of future renewable wind and solar capacity, enhanced conservation initiatives and the expected incremental dollar investments associated with enabling transmission and distribution, as well as the implementation of a smart grid. We used that data to examine what construction, manufacturing and engineering positions would be created. We're cognizant of the fact that, at the beginning of the investment period, limited amounts of solar panel and wind turbine manufacturing would be conducted in the province, but over the longer term, it would be projected that our investments would support the creation and expansion of renewable energy manufacturing facilities. So we do have some detailed analysis undertaken with respect to that job creation.

I'm very proud of the work that we're doing and I'm very confident that, with a \$5-billion investment coming into this sector, we will see these jobs created. That's what our province needs, wants and desires. We look forward to that future.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** We have just, this morning and also late yesterday, received a presentation from the member for Welland expressing his disappointment with this legislation, in particular with the proposal for the imposition of mandatory home energy audits. I agree, and we look forward to this government rethinking that mandatory aspect, at minimum.

As the member for Welland has indicated, the information has been out there. It has been out there for decades. The federal government, regardless of the party



in power, has done an excellent job over the decades of informing consumers about the importance of doing the kind of things that this government feels they can ram through in a mandatory way.

As Peter Kormos indicated, people know about insulation. They know about air leaks in their windows. Why not build on that strength and that information, build on the education programs and the informative brochures that are out there?

Further to that, don't call a mandatory audit an incentive. This is not a carrot; this is a stick. I myself am disappointed in this legislation. I do ask: Where is the vision? Where is the vision that we saw in the 1960s and in the 1970s, when people—architects—were encouraged to rethink and redesign the layout of their homes?

I'm very let down by this legislation. A number of issues were raised this morning and yesterday, and the question is out there: Is nuclear green? Is natural gas green? How many windmills will it take to run a steel mill?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments? The member for Timmins-James Bay.

**M. Gilles Bisson:** Merci beaucoup. Ça me donne l'occasion de commenter le discours de notre bon collègue M. Kormos de Welland. Écoute. It's clear that what the government is trying to do in this legislation as far as direction is not bad. I think there's hardly a member in this assembly who would say this is not a direction in which we have to go. I guess it really is that the devils are in the detail, and it will be interesting to see, as we go into committee, if the government's going to be prepared to amend this legislation so that we can achieve some of the goals that are set out.

I'm going to get a chance a little bit later to get into some of the details of things that I think we need to do. But the member for Welland, as other members have in the debate previously, has raised the issue that what we have in this bill, although a step in the right direction, lacks the kind of policy that is needed in behind the legislation, and the programs that are needed from government in order to be able to make sure that we actually end up where this bill is trying to bring us.

For example, one of the areas that is of great interest to the Ontario economy, and I think of great interest to those of us who would like to have an opportunity to retrofit our houses with better insulation, better windows, or utilize new technologies as far as solar, wind or geothermal—there really aren't the types of incentives in place to make that affordable for the consumer. If a consumer looks at trying to get into these technologies as a way to be able to find a way to green the economy, and at the same time lessen our environmental footprint, you need to have something to make it interesting for the consumer, because at current cost it is very expensive to put some of these technologies in, and the payback can be as much as 10 or 15 years. So, from a straight economic point of view, they may not be affordable to the consumer, and I think one of the failures of this legislation is that it doesn't look at what kinds of policies and

programs we can put in place to make sure that consumers are able to do what they need to do within their own homes to green this economy and green the environment.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Mike Colle:** One point that a lot of members are missing, and maybe it's because they haven't done the energy audit at home, is that there's a federal government rule that says that if you don't have an energy audit, you're not eligible for the \$10,000 worth of rebates. So the federal government now tells us that you have to have an energy audit to be eligible for \$10,000 worth of rebates. So just remember that.

The other thing is—and I think the member from Welland made a good point—there are some serious concerns about the cost of nuclear. But the mindset we now have in this province—the old NIMBYist mindset—is that people are protesting against transmission lines. They don't want them. Wind power? They hate wind power. Solar farms? Not in my backyard. And no wonder you're stuck with nuclear. Let's get rid of the opposition that is just about the visual effect of a windmill that you'll never see and is only a couple of percentage points of the whole energy total. We need a major mindset change.

The jobs: There are the incredible numbers of jobs. I've been saying for four or five years, like Mr. Lisi, who lives in my riding. He's got this 50-gallon water tank in his basement; 50 gallons cooking away like we all do back home; 50 gallons cooking away in Mr. O'Toole's basement—yet if you want to get rid of that 50-gallon tank and replace it with an on-demand water heater, you can't get one made in Ontario or Canada. You have to pay \$3,000 to get a little water heater that they have in every country in the world but Canada—and Ontario. Could you imagine all the jobs we could create in Timmins and James Bay and Oshawa by manufacturing the on-demand water heaters that they've been using for 50 years in South America? Why not get some factory in Sarnia to make the darned things? Save energy, save money, and create jobs in Sarnia, for Pete's sake.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate? In rotation, the member for Durham.

0920

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to stand on this time allocated. Just 10 minutes; it's hardly enough time to talk about the importance of today being square root day. That's the third day of the third month in the ninth year. Three is the square root of nine, so that's an important starting point; we got something right. What we haven't got right is Bill 150.

I think this bill here—I want to start, at the outset, on my own behalf. I can't necessarily speak on behalf of the party, because this is a wedged bill. This bill is the Green Energy Act, and personally, I'm in support of green energy.

It comes down to a very minute description of how you would define green energy. I would say that hydro-electric—that's water dams—would be green energy,



with the exception that often, to create a dam, you have to flood property. In many cases, it's property that has been affecting First Nations for hundreds of years. It's a huge issue in Quebec. They have hydroelectric power, and for most of it they flooded land that was in dispute in the courts.

This bill is light on the description of green energy. I'd say that green energy is a popular term. After all, Barack Obama is using it. It alludes to the terms "innovation" and "creativity." The word "green" is an optimistic colour.

Then they get into the natural gas. Natural gas, of course, is a carbon-based fuel. It emits carbon, which is against Kyoto. Coal, of course, is opposed to the Kyoto accord, and it would not conform with the green energy thing. The United States, our largest trading partner, is convinced, and their scientists are convinced that they can come up with carbon-capturing coal sequestration. The largest resource for energy in the world is coal. There's more coal than natural gas and petroleum, or crude.

This topic of Bill 150—there was a report done when Dwight Duncan, the Minister of Finance, was the Ministry of Energy. They commissioned a special ministry under Bill 100. Bill 100 was when they kind of restructured the energy file. It's important to look at the history if you want to know much about the future. This bill, Bill 150, is an admission that Bill 100 was wrong. They had a report, and it was called the supply mix report. "Supply mix" means how much of the energy, the power, on the transmission system is going to come from what source of power. In Ontario, the mix of energy inputs has traditionally not changed since the time of our government, really, and prior to that.

If you go right back to the genesis of electricity of Ontario, Sir Adam Beck, in 1906, I think it was, had a theory for Ontario, and a vision. It would be nice if we had a vision today, because the economy is in the tank. His vision for Ontario was power at cost. What he meant was power at any cost. That's really what he meant. That's why Ontario became the industrial heartland of Canada, the wealthiest province and the furnace of energy for Canada. In fact, I would say, up until recently, it still is.

If you look at the supply mix—Niagara Falls is the best example—it was hydroelectric-based. Then, as our economy grew, we could not have enough hydroelectric power—which is the cheapest form of power, by the way—to energize our economy. They mapped out most of the hydro opportunities, and the farther away you got from the large centres, like Hamilton, Toronto, Ottawa and London, these hydroelectric power projects weren't as efficient, because when you start transmitting power all the way down to Toronto, you lose about 20% of the power that's been dispatched from the plant. That lost energy is called line loss, and now we're seeing that in our hydro bill at home.

This whole thing is about our hydro bill at home. Talk about green energy; I'm going to bring the supply mix

into it full circle here, but here's the real issue: They're going to add power onto the system. Wind is 12 to 15 cents a kilowatt hour. What do we pay at home today? About five cents a kilowatt hour. So that means, if you're buying wind power, either you or the taxpayer—which is really you, anyway—it's a 300% increase in price. What's that going to do to seniors and people on fixed incomes? I'm for green energy, remember that; I'm also for being honest with the people of Ontario.

They're talking about wind turbines. They're also talking about solar power. Let's talk a bit about solar power. I have one in my riding. It's about 40 kilowatts. It's invested in by a young, new Canadian. He's from the Netherlands, I believe. Very technically competent—he designed most of it himself. He's an engineer. He wasn't employed because he couldn't get his engineering credentials legitimized here, but anyway. He went on a standard-offer contract being offered by the minister for wind. Do you know what he's being paid for a kilowatt hour? Forty-two cents a kilowatt. That's eight times the cost of energy on the system.

All of the renewables, digesters, biomass, all of the alternatives they're offering are about four times more expensive, on average, than the energy we're using today. My solution is, there's not enough information here about consumer protection or about conservation strategies, not just the squiggly light bulbs.

There are technologies today called smart systems, which would allow me—now, this is a very good example. I could be driving home tonight, or in the GO train, which I take most of the time to save energy, and I could phone home and turn on the microwave oven. Do you know that? That's a smart system.

They said that they're going to give us the smart meter. It's not a smart meter. No, no; the meter you're putting in our house is not a smart meter. Here's the information, for the people of Ontario: First of all, it's a time-of-use meter. It will calculate the load dispatched to your home at a certain time. That's what it does. And if you look at the fine print and the way Dalton is doing this, it's so treacherous it frightens me.

There are going to be bands of energy cost. If you get the energy cost at 3 o'clock in the morning, it's going to be about five cents a kilowatt hour. If you have your breakfast at 8 in the morning, you're going to be paying about 14 cents a kilowatt hour. You're paying five today; it's going to be 15. It's a 300% increase. So to make it smart, you're going to have to have timers on all these little gadgets, on your dishwasher, dryer. You'll have a whole pile of them on your table, attaching them to things. This is nothing but a misleading—potentially that's not an appropriate word—but it's a difficult way to tell the people of Ontario—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I would caution the member on the word that he's used.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Yes, well, I apologize. That's too strong, but it turns out it's true.

Here's the issue, what you really need to know: You're going to use less—that's called conservation—



and you're going to pay more. That's what Bill 150 is all about. It's a tragedy in action, and it's being communicated in such a spurious way that it troubles me. Why don't they just say, "Look, Ontario, we've got to be a leader. We're going to charge you more for something that you have no discretion in using"? Because energy—this is the final line—is a non-discretionary consumption. It's not like cable TV; if it's too much, you can cut her off. A non-discretionary consumption is price-inelastic. In other words, your consumption does not change with price. In fact, you use about 1,000 kilowatt hours per month in your home. You cook your food, you wash your clothes, you wash your body, you heat your home, and that's the climate we live in. Tell me how much the consumer can actually save—maybe 10%.

By the way, 62% of all energy produced in this province is used by industry. What's the strategy to retool energy use in Ontario's manufacturing, pulp and paper, forestry, mining, auto and steel sectors? They use the energy, and you're going to put them out of business in the economy that's already in the tank. This is a failed plan, and if you vote for it you don't understand what you're doing.

0930

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Well, that was an interesting comment made by my friend from Durham. I always enjoy listening to what he has to say, because he does feel passionately about these issues and sometimes raises them from a bit of a different perspective from other members—I mean that as a compliment—in the sense of trying to look at things from the perspective of what it means to the average individual.

I think he's right on the issue of the smart meters. I've long felt that these things are not smart meters; they're really smart in the way they bill you. That is about all they really are. They're not smart as far as anything else. What you're going to end up with, and the member is quite right, is that people will be forced, by way of having to pay higher rates of electricity during peak times, to move their usage to other times.

There's an environmental issue here in the sense of how you're able to better balance your load. In fairness to the government, you do want to have some way so that not everybody is using all the utilities at the same time, making it difficult for OPG to provide the amount of electricity we need. One of the difficulties you have is that at particular times when you have heavy usage, they have to ramp up generators—for example, coal-fired and others—in order to provide that extra electricity that's needed within those peak times. Then, later on during the day and in the evening, obviously those particular generators come off-line as they're not needed. So the issue becomes: Does the hydro grid have the capacity to deal with the peaks? The answer is yes. If the answer is yes, that you can deal with the peaks, then you've got to see this for what it is. It's not really about conservation; it's about finding ways to whack the consumer with yet

another hydroelectric charge that we can ill afford to pay. At the end, people are still going to have to cook their bacon and eggs in the morning, you still have to run your washing machine, you still have to do many of the things you've got to do, and a lot of those things physically can't be moved to other periods of time because that would be pretty impractical. So I thought the member raised an interesting point that people should pay some attention to.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. David Oraziotti:** It is a pleasure this morning to comment on the remarks that were made this morning by the member from Durham. Bill 150, the Green Energy Act: What a positive bill, and I'm very excited about this piece of legislation.

I can tell you that in my riding of Sault Ste. Marie, we have seen such a tremendous transformation already when it comes to energy production that it's really remarkable. The 189-megawatt wind farm, the Brookfield wind farm, with an investment of \$400 million in Sault Ste. Marie, has created new jobs, construction jobs, a new wind energy training program at the college and all kinds of spinoffs. It's been absolutely fantastic. Essar Steel right now is building a cogeneration project with 200 jobs. It will reduce their electricity need by about 70 megawatts. The steel mill uses 140 megs of power, so that's about half of all the energy they're going to need right from cogeneration. St. Marys Paper, a very important employer in our community, is applying for a biomass cogeneration project which will help to reduce their costs. The Pod solar generation company has received a contract of about \$360 million from OPA to develop a 60-megawatt solar farm.

This act continues to build on the renewable initiatives we've already made in the province of Ontario and will continue to demonstrate our commitment to protect the environment, while at the same time creating a stable and sustainable electricity grid, as well as creating jobs. There's been a lot of discussion about the economy these days; rightfully so. This act helps to enhance our economic base and improve our manufacturing capabilities.

I hear from the opposition benches some negativity around the bill. I want to ask the members: Are you prepared to support the Green Energy Act? I want to know where you stand on this, because this is what Ontarians want and this is the future in Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm pleased to have a chance to comment on the speech of the member from Durham on Bill 150, the green energy bill. The member from Sault Ste. Marie was just commenting about the cost of energy, which was brought up by the member from Durham, when he pointed out that the majority of energy used is used by industry—I think he said 62%. As the member from Sault Ste. Marie would know, most industry in the north, certainly the forestry sector, is shut down and part of their problem is the cost of energy. So what is this bill



going to do to the cost of energy? That's a question we in the opposition are asking, and I think the general public would appreciate the fact that we're asking that question. The minister has said that it's going to mean a 1% increase for the consumer's energy bill. Well, I find that one a little hard to believe, frankly. They're also talking about spending \$5 billion, and if you do the math, I think it's more than 1% just on that \$5 billion that's being spent. So a point that we certainly question and that I think consumers worry about is what is going to happen to the cost of energy. Equally important for business, there's not going to be any industry left in the north. Up in Iroquois Falls, we have AbitibiBowater shutting down their paper mill and looking at selling their hydro assets. Certainly, the cost of energy is something that has to be considered.

We're all in favour of green energy and having more green energy in the mix, but we also need industry in this province. Under this government, we lost something like 70,000 jobs last month. Are you just going to make it worse by forcing up the cost of energy, making more and more businesses uncompetitive in this province? It's like death by a thousand cuts from this government. They keep introducing another piece of legislation that makes it harder to stay in business in this province. Every month we have something else coming down the stream making it more and more difficult for business to survive in this province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** We have time for one last question or comment. The member for Eglinton—Lawrence.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I guess the key thing to keep in mind is that there are serious international, global transformations taking place.

Prime Minister Harper was saying yesterday, "You know, you guys have got all the criticisms, but you don't have any solutions and aren't even offering any solutions." We see the opposition constantly talking down any legislation that comes forward. They're talking down this energy act which is transformative, but I'm saying, what do you suggest?

We're saying that conservation is critical and there are all kinds of conservation incentives here. There is a total shift into renewables, like solar, wind. There's also a recognition that everyone has a role to play in this transformation. It can't be done by government alone, so that's why it's engaging the public in this process. We hope that the public will understand that this is about all of us changing the way we live, because it not only reduces our carbon footprint—and that costs not only the air quality we live in and the quality of life in our environment, it costs us huge amounts of money.

Anybody who stands up here in the opposition will always say they're basically going to freeze the cost of fuel and energy. You can't do that. It's always going to be expensive. What we're trying to do by getting people to conserve, getting people to look at more efficiency in energy production, is we're going to maintain it at a level where industry and homeowners can have reasonably

priced energy. That's what this is about. It's not about a panacea; it's about being reasonable.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Durham has two minutes to reply.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I seek unanimous consent to have another hour, please, to speak on this topic.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Durham is seeking unanimous consent of the House to continue his remarks for another hour. Agreed? I heard a couple of noes.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** This one here is actually an article by—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Member for Durham, when the Speaker is standing, your mike is turned off, the camera is turned off you. Take your seat.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Yes. You can't use that as a prop, and I'd ask you to keep it on your desk. If you're going to refer to it, that's okay, but don't use it as a prop. Thank you.

0940

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Thank you, Speaker. I hope you have restored my time.

I would only say that this is a bill that has been deliberately designed in a treacherous sort of way to wedge us.

Here's our position, from my point of view: First of all, we support green energy. We support green energy and conservation. We also support truth in legislation. Here is the issue: The numbers don't work out. Five billion invested—there are no details on it. Fifty thousand jobs—most of them will be government inspectors going around to your house. Here's why I'm having difficulty with supporting it overtly: I want, first of all, thorough public hearings around the province. I want to make it clear to you that I don't like certain provisions: the warrantless entry, the overriding of municipal law and the overriding of the conservation act. There are parts of this bill that the people of Ontario need to know about.

Can you imagine the Oak Ridges moraine, which is a pristine area in my riding, allowing, as a right, a whole series of wind turbines? How tragic is that? I am just so disappointed in this treacherous bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you. Further debate?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I get an opportunity to participate in this debate on the heels of what was an interesting two-minute wrap-up, I must say.

I want to come at this from a couple of different perspectives, because we need to set the record straight. I was listening to government members as they were doing the responses to the member for Durham's comments. They're trying to portray it as if the opposition is opposed to what the government is trying to do here.

Now, let's be real clear. There's nobody here, at least in our NDP caucus, who is opposed to the intent of what this government wants to do. In fact, it's part of our party platform. If you'll notice, pretty well all four leadership



candidates have been ascribing to doing exactly that, moving Ontario toward being able to move by—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** You should stop heckling me like that. That's not nice, is it?

So the point I would make is that there's hardly anybody who disagrees with the intent of what the government's trying to do as far as direction. I think we all understand that we need to, as a jurisdiction, find a way—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I'm having difficulty hearing the member for Timmins–James Bay because of some of the extraneous noise in the House. I would ask all members to quiet down a bit so we can hear the member for Timmins–James Bay.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Thank you very much, Speaker.

As I was saying, just to start over again, there's hardly a member in this House who is opposed to the direction that the government is trying to take in regard to trying to find ways of increasing conservation within the province of Ontario and trying to develop a greener economy, a greener industry. There's nobody who argues with that.

The problem is, when we look at the legislation, it goes in that direction—there are some measures in this bill, yes, that are positive in the sense of bringing us in the direction that we all want to go—but in the details, it doesn't get us there in some cases.

I think the real test is going to be—with all candour, this bill has to get into committee so that we can have people come before the Legislature and say, “How can we strengthen this bill, by way of both the legislative changes that have to be made in it and the policy changes that have to be made by the government, in order to deal with getting us to that point?”

I'm just going to go through a couple of things that I think are important to talk about. For example, the minister says that the act will lead to a rapid expansion of renewable energies, but you refuse to set any targets or timelines to get us there. If the government is saying that they want to move us in the direction of more renewable energy, it seems to me that you have to set some targets.

We know the experience of Germany. Germany, some years ago, decided that one of the things that it wanted to do is exactly that, move itself from what is primarily their—coal-fired and nuclear are a big part of what they do and they were trying to move themselves on to renewables. They decided one good way to do that was with solar. What the German government did is set some targets. It said, “We want to install X amount of solar panels on roofs per year for the next five years in Germany, in order to move us toward getting more renewable energy put into our grid.” They decided to do that by way of solar.

You looked at Norway and you looked at Denmark, which went the way of wind. They set targets. They said, “We want to be able to produce X amount of the total capacity needed for electricity in our country. We want to move to a certain percentage by a certain date.” So they

set targets and timelines. What that did is it forced industry, it forced government and it forced everyone to move toward those targets and those timelines.

When you have a bill that doesn't have targets or timelines, it's a little bit like saying “motherhood and apple pie.” Well, who's going to disagree with the government on motherhood and apple pie?

The issue is that there are no timelines and no targets, so I say to you that I agree with what you're trying to do in the bill—I have no problem supporting the concept of the bill. The problem is that there need to be targets and timelines so that we're clearly trying to get to a certain objective within a certain timeline. I don't think that's an unreasonable request on the part of the opposition and the public. It seems to me that if you want to get somewhere, you have to say, “Here's where we would like to be in a certain amount of time.”

The other thing is that you say the act is supposed to provide loans and perhaps grants to retrofit and for conservation. Let me explain that: If you look at the bill, it's supposed to provide some sort of grant-to-retrofit program to allow consumers to reinsulate their houses, to change the windows, maybe to put in solar panels or geothermal or other things when it comes to renewable energies in their homes. But, again, if you look at the policies the government has in place within the various ministries that it's responsible for and if you look at what's in this bill, it is very silent on what the actual programs will be that will assist consumers in making those transitions from having everything coming off the grid to both conservation and possibly themselves generating electricity by solar, wind or other means.

Again, if you don't have targets and you don't have the programs to assist in getting you there, it's a bit of an empty shell. I guess that's part of the problem with the bill. Yes, we're supportive of the direction that the government wants to go. We all agree that we want to build a greener economy, and we all agree that we want to do more in the way of conservation. There's nobody who is going to disagree with you on that, but when you look at the bill, it doesn't give us any of the details on how we're going to get there.

I'll just give you my situation as I see it as a consumer. My brother and I own a cottage out at Kamiskotia Lake, and unfortunately, often enough, there are electricity failures out at that lake because of the transmission system, I guess. So we're having a bit of a problem. We need to keep the power going because we heat the water in the winter, and we need to have a heat system going in the event that the power goes down so that we don't freeze the pump water and pipes etc. within the cottage. We need to have a constant supply of electricity, so we looked at putting in a backup generating system. We decided against that because environmentally, it doesn't make a lot of sense. Number one, running a gas or diesel generator is not very economical, and number two, it's not the greenest option.

So we said, “Maybe what we can do is look at solar panels charging a battery system so that we can convert



electricity to AC as a way of putting enough electricity into the home so that we can at least keep the heat trace on the water line, we can keep the heat on the pump,” and that kind of stuff. But the problem is that the technology to get us there, just a simple system of backup for two or three hours, is fairly expensive and when you look at the payback, there is no payback.

So we said, “Okay, there’s another way. We could look at possibly putting a solar panel on the roof along with a small wind turbine, generating electricity. When we don’t need it, we can sell it back into the grid through a reverse meter set-up, and when we’re consuming electricity, we’ll be able to pull it off that and at the same time have a battery backup unit that would achieve the goals that we want.” The payback on something like that is 12 to 14 years. So for the average consumer, who has that kind of money to invest in order to get us to where we want to go?

I’m saying that we need to have specific programs that allow consumers to make those types of investments, with some assistance. I would argue that one of the things you’re able to do is to say, “All right. If you’re going to be saving as a result of all of the energy retrofit stuff that you do in your home”—you put in better windows, better insulation, you’re going to put on a solar panel with a wind turbine etc., and you saved X cost; let’s say the number is \$15,000—“you’re going to be able to finance that \$15,000 upfront cost by the savings on your utility bill, be it gas or electricity.” You say, “All right, it will save, on average, 20% or 25% of my energy bills.” That is worth a certain amount of money. Work that out over a 10-year period; it’s a certain amount of cash.

So the government says, “Okay, we’ll upfront you the money in order to offset your capital outlay at the front,” and then it will be paid back to the government from the savings that you would have on your energy bill. It’s one way of being able to reduce the capital cost upfront so that the consumer can actually go out and do it.

The good part about doing something like that is, it really then starts to build the market that you need in order to make these things happen. This is where we agree. If you’re able to develop a market where consumers in large numbers, industry in large numbers and the government, which own buildings such as hospitals, schools etc. in large numbers, are now having some form of incentive in order to invest in energy retrofitting, you’re going to spin a local industry in Ontario that cannot be exported or outsourced. You can’t move the house, you can’t move the building to Mexico to have it done. It’s got to be done wherever it is physically located, and then you have to have Ontario content rules that say 60%, or whatever number we come up with, of the equipment that is being used has to be sourced by suppliers in Ontario. You’ve now created a market that is for Ontario. It is sustainable over a period of time. We position our economy in such a way that we then can become the exporters of some of these technologies and services and goods to other places around the world, incubating it here in Ontario itself.

**0950**

So it seems to me there are things that are missing in this bill to get us to where we want to go, and that’s really what the opposition is to the bill. It’s not the intent of the bill. Nobody refuses the intent of the bill or says anything—well, I’m saying within my party, within the New Democratic Party of Ontario, and I’m sure there would be very few otherwise in other parties that would do the same. But my point is that we need to have the details in this bill.

I just end on this point: We all know that every kilowatt of electricity that is saved by way of energy efficiency is a kilowatt that we don’t have to generate. Therefore, it is estimated that 20% to 40% of electricity could be saved if we went this way, and it would lessen our need to expand the nuclear fleet, something that at the end I think will be very costly and dangerous.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** One of the areas I’d like to speak to this morning would have a lot to do with the member who’s just spoken.

I was with the finance and economic affairs committee on a tour of the north and of the First Nations area some three or four years ago. One of the things the minister has made sure that he has put in his bill and something that he’s going to do, and there’s a directive sent to OPA on this: There just have to be more discussions with the First Nations. They have to be part of this. Aboriginal partnerships and capacity-building will be important to the development of new, renewable energy projects. A lot of the small hydro projects are on—First Nations could develop them.

When you’re depending on diesel, certainly wind is an option that should be investigated. So this will be one of the areas that is important to the minister. He specifically mentioned it in his directive, the amount of renewables that come back in the energy mix that we’ll get into that report in the next two months. This is one of the areas that we’re going to go to.

Also, the community power: If a group of people in a community—and this comes, I guess, from the European experience—can come up with a good project, then there is going to be assistance for them. Enable community ownership of renewable energy projects by citizen-led energy co-operatives and clarify that the local distribution companies and municipalities are able to invest in the community in renewable energy projects under 10 megawatts: That’s going to be very important. That’s where the grassroots conservation, the grassroots support for climate change initiatives, is going to come from.

So that whole thing of expanding and supporting the green economy at the community level, First Nations, is where we have to go. It’s where we have to understand what we’re facing in 2014, 2020 and 2050 with our climate change targets, our greenhouse gas reduction targets. So this is the right bill. This will involve the communities that we have to involve.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?



**Mr. John O'Toole:** I think the member from Timmins—James Bay said it as best as I've heard it described, and I wish him success in his attempt to be leader of the party, because he approaches things in a sort of reasonable way. I think what he said is a good lesson for those viewers listening today. Certainly the government members aren't listening, probably because they've been told how they're going to vote. So we understand that.

Here's what the real story is. He was saying that the conservation part should have a much broader focus and a much more compelling argument. We would be supportive in the fullest sense. When he said that the kilowatt that you don't use is the kilowatt that isn't generated, that's the true psychological outcome that we want here. But all the toys and triggers you're using are just load-shifting; it's not conservation. When I use a kilowatt at a different time of the day, I still have to generate it. So it's not conservation; it's called load-shifting. This is a very technical subject, and I'm so disappointed that the members of the government side haven't been properly briefed on this. In fact, the tragedy is I think if they really listen to some of the things that Mr. Bisson was saying, they would question their Minister of Energy to have a fuller briefing for all of the members here. This is a technical, substantive shift.

Adam Beck had it right: We've got to make this product affordable for the people of Ontario. There has to be an assurance for seniors; for people on ventilators, who need it for breathing in their home; and for children. This is going to be a rigorous imposition into people's lives. This is something we shouldn't be taking lightly. Yes, I support green energy, but conservation is where we need to be focused more specifically.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Laurel C. Broten:** I want to speak to the issue with respect to the feed-in tariffs once again. A comprehensive understanding of what feed-in tariffs will do, in terms of the incentivization of more renewable energy products, gives the comfort that the member opposite is seeking with respect to that aspirational aspect.

The member opposite is saying let's set some targets and let's try to attain those targets. In our view, that could establish an artificial cap for the amount of investment that would be undertaken in the province with respect to the construction of those renewables. If you are aspiring, as we are, to be and establish the North American lead as a jurisdiction for renewable energy, then what you want to do is set the stage for anyone who wants to participate in that process to have the certainty that they need to go after each opportunity to build those renewables. That's what this legislation does, and I believe that's the key reason why we have received the significant amount of support that we have.

You put in place a feed-in tariff that sets your price for the varieties of electricity being generated, whether it's wind onshore or offshore, solar, hydro or biomass. You say it's a certainty that we will purchase that electricity, a certainty that we will connect it to the grid and a certainty

that we will issue permits in a timely way to allow you to move forward with that project. That allows the highest level of participation and it is part and parcel of the transformative nature of feed-in tariffs.

If the members opposite take a look at the aspirational nature of the feed-in tariff and the system that we're establishing, they too will have the confidence that we have in this piece of legislation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm pleased to have an opportunity to speak briefly on Bill 150, after the member for Timmins—James Bay added his comments.

One of the points I wanted to talk about was the whole audit procedure and whether it really makes sense. In the past year I went through the procedure of having a voluntary audit done on my own home. Just to tell you how it came to be, I had decided I was going to replace a broken air conditioner with a heat pump, which would then heat and cool. The installer of the heat pump said to me, "Well, if you get an energy audit done, then you get \$800 back from the government," I think it was. So even though I'd decided ahead of time I was going to do this heat pump, I had an energy audit done, which told me that, yes, I could put a heat pump in. But you have to spend \$400 to get the audit done to get \$400 back.

I would say to the government, why not just give the \$800 back on the purchase of the energy-efficient product? Make it simple for people, instead of coming up with a complicated process where you have to spend money to get money back. I think it would make a lot more sense.

I had an interesting meeting last weekend with a constituent who's in the—not a constituent; a business located in Ontario that is in the business of solar hot water. He had installed a system in the riding of Parry Sound—Muskoka. He was making me aware of that. It was John Verway of Copperhill Solar. Certainly, it looks like a very interesting business and one that might make a lot of sense, with solar hot water versus the photovoltaic, where you're spending 42 cents a kilowatt hour on the photovoltaic. So I hope the government is looking at systems like the solar hot water, which would probably make more sense for hot water and heating than the photovoltaic systems.

1000

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Timmins—James Bay has two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I forget the member's riding—I don't have my glasses with me—but one of the government members was making the point that this bill is going to deal with trying to spur hydroelectric and other development on First Nations communities. I just want to remind the member that if we're waiting for this bill to do that, I think we'll be waiting for some time.

The reality is that the communities of James Bay, along with the communities of northwestern Ontario, as you well know, are mostly landlocked communities. Most of them are off the hydro grid. There are many



issues that we need to deal with in order to electrify those communities. I know we've done some up on the western part of James Bay with the power line going up. De Beers has helped tremendously in regard to electricity for Attawapiskat, Fort Albany and Kashechewan, but those were projects that were done by the First Nations themselves. In every case, it's the same story: It is very hard to engage provincial and federal governments to help and assist by way of helping to finance these projects or developing policies within the government and OPG in order to be able to move forward with electrification projects for those communities. It has been a really frustrating process.

I know that Martin Falls Ogoki has been trying now for the better part of five or six years to get the provincial government to accept them into the OPG system, and to have OPG run the electrical plant there. Currently it's run by the band. It's very expensive. Fuel costs are extremely high, and people are having to pay exorbitant amounts for electricity and have no other choice, because where else are you going to go? You're in the community. There isn't even a road to get in there, so you're going to have difficulty.

I just say to the member: I appreciate your concern for the people of the First Nations of northern Ontario, but let's not try to make pretend that this bill is going to deal with what is a very difficult issue, and the lack of policy that we presently have, both at the federal and provincial levels, to deal with those issues.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** It's my pleasure to add a few comments this morning on Bill 150, the Green Energy Act. I want to begin by thanking the member from Timmins—James Bay for his comments. As a fellow northerner, I wish him well this weekend. I'm sure that he's happy, in one form or another, that the end is near. They can be long and difficult processes, and we wish them all well across the floor in that regard.

I listened with some interest to the comments made by the opposition parties on this particular piece of legislation, and I want to begin by referencing, just briefly at the beginning of my comments, those made by the members of the Conservative Party when it comes to the price point that this may have, or the effect that this bill may have on energy costs in Ontario. The two members of the Conservative Party who spoke in this regard, from Parry Sound—Muskoka and from Durham, would have left or attempted to leave the impression with those watching on television and people living in the province that somehow, the comments made or the legislation brought forward—if it does, in fact, increase costs on hydro in the province of Ontario—will be the first time that this has ever happened. Well, the Conservative Party had nine years on this file, and what they did was bring in a price cap. While they would like to let people in the province believe that while they were in government their actions did not have any effect on the price of your hydro bill when it showed up at your door, of course

that's not the case. The price cap led, in effect, to about \$1 billion of costs being transferred off-book. Of course, people are still seeing the effect of that on their hydro bill. It's important for people to understand that, while it wasn't a direct rate increase, it was about a billion dollars as a result of the rate cap, off-book but still reflected in the price that you're paying when your hydro bill arrives at your door. So I think it's important that we remind people about that.

I was in the House yesterday as well when a member of the third party had about 20 minutes to speak on this particular piece of legislation. That member—I think it was the member from Trinity—Spadina—spent most of his 20 minutes speaking about nuclear waste. I'm not sure what the point of that particular 18 or 20 minutes was, speaking about nuclear waste as if the people in the province aren't aware of the dangers associated with nuclear fuel material, but clearly that's something that's out there and part of the public discourse.

I think what we need to do, and what the people in the province are expecting from government, is a choice. We can't be paralyzed by indecision. We know that under previous governments, going back from 1990 to about 2003, when we came into power, very little was done in terms of bringing on new supply in the province of Ontario. At this point, I don't think people are interested in discussions about those sorts of issues. They want to know what we're going to do to bring on enough supply in the province of Ontario so that we can meet the energy demands of the province of Ontario.

The Conservative members who talked about the price point, what they didn't talk about was when they did nothing on this file. When they transferred the cost off-book, we saw the blackout in 2003 which clearly illustrated for people how close the demand and supply were in the province. What happened under the Conservative Party was that we had become a net importer of electricity into the province of Ontario. How much do you think that we were paying for the cost of that imported power?

I think people are looking for a little bit of leadership on this issue. We know that from 1990 to 1995, the cost of hydro in the province of Ontario went up by some 40% to 45%. While I was listening to the member of the third party speak yesterday, I was interested to hear him talk about the commitment that they had, or lack of commitment, to renewables in the province of Ontario, which was clearly illustrated by the cancellation of a project in about 1990 or 1991, the Conawapa project, which was signed under the David Peterson government. That was a project that would have brought 1,000 megawatts of renewable power into the province of Ontario at about 4 cents a kilowatt hour. It was cheap power. It was clean power. It was affordable power. That would have brought about 1,000 megawatts into the province of Ontario, and it would have led to an incredible boom in construction across northwestern Ontario. I'm not sure what that speaks to from the third party's perspective, if in fact they support green energy or not. I guess we are going to find out when this bill comes for voting.



To govern is to choose. When you do choose, invariably there are groups and individuals who are going to be less than happy with your choices, but as I said, you can't let that paralyze you into indecision. You need to move forward, and that's what we're doing. It's important that the people in the province understand that what is before us today, Bill 150, the Green Energy Act, is not the beginning of what our government has done on renewable energy. In fact, this is the next phase of it.

Since we've been in government in 2003, somewhere I think in the order of magnitude of about 1,000 or more megawatts of renewable energy are already online in the province of Ontario. I don't want people thinking that what we're doing today is just the beginning of this. In fact, we have been working in this regard for most of the four or five years that we've been in government, since 2003.

Our standard offer program, offered through the Ontario Power Authority, has been the vehicle through which we have brought those renewables online. There are many projects. Even in my own riding I can reference a few: a 10-megawatt cogen approved in Atikokan, a solar farm in my riding, another wind farm in my riding. I know that just maybe two weeks ago in the small town of Dorion, just northeast of Thunder Bay, in the riding of my colleague Michael Gravelle, an announcement was made of a 99-megawatt wind farm. My colleague from Sault Ste. Marie, David Oraziatti, spoke earlier. He talked about 190-megawatt wind farm that's been established in Sault Ste. Marie, about a \$400-million commitment. In fact, to this point already, we have about 1,000 megawatts of wind energy online. This isn't the beginning of this process. We have been moving forward in this regard for quite some time.

I think it's also important to remind people in the province—and they know this, but I think it needs to be a bit part of the debate—that there are no perfect energy sources. If somebody's got one, let me know what it is. We know the problems associated with nuclear, but we also know that nuclear has been around for 30 or 40 years, and neither of the opposition parties, when they had their opportunity, took any of it offline or did anything to bring new energy online. They just kind of ignored the file. We know there are problems with nuclear.

We know even with hydraulic, there are people that aren't happy with that. If you have to build a dam and flood out lands, we know people don't like that. We know that gas is a diminishing resource and that it's expensive, so people don't like energy to be produced by using natural gas. We know about coal and the greenhouse gas emissions, and we know there are people who don't like that. We know that wind and solar are far from perfect, because if the wind doesn't blow and the sun doesn't shine, you've got a problem there as well. That's why it's important for us as a province to get the energy mix correct. That's what we're trying to do. There's going to be a mix of nuclear; there's going to be a mix of gas; there will be some other renewables brought online. It's important that we do that.

We all know that for industry to establish in the province, they want baseload power. They want to know that when they need it, with the flick of a switch it's going to be there. That's why we're always going to have some peaking plants, like gas, around, even though it's a little bit more expensive. That's why we're going to have nuclear as baseload. We know that. That's not going to change, and I think the parties across the way know that as well.

I've only got a few minutes left. I want to close by talking about how our open mind around bringing renewables on stream has led to some success stories in northwestern Ontario. For example, in the community of Fort Frances, the pulp and paper mill, AbitibiBowater, has completely converted their energy requirements to renewables. They have a biomass boiler there now, I think, that produces 85—I forget the total megawatts that it produces, but an \$85-million construction project in the community of Fort Frances in the AbitibiBowater mill there, funded in part by a \$22-million grant from our government. That's a commitment that began three or four years ago. That pulp and paper mill now is completely energy self-sufficient, off the grid. I say this to my friends from the Conservative Party concerned about cost: There are programs in place that will help them get off the grid if they're concerned about cost. There's one example of a \$22-million grant, an \$85-million construction project. If you're looking for some quantification of the jobs created through green energy projects, I would suggest that there's a very good one right there. That \$85-million project employed dozens, if not hundreds, of people from my community in the building trades of Thunder Bay.

Finally, I want to talk about a community in my riding, Atikokan. The Atikokan coal plant was in jeopardy of being closed. We fought like heck to see what we could do to keep that open, and we've now seen, as well, what's going on in terms of our government having an open mind on the renewables file. Back in 2006, we announced in our budget \$4 million for the Atikokan bio-research initiative. Two million dollars of that research has been expended at Lakehead University, in my home community of Thunder Bay. Through the work of Lakehead University and other universities across the province, the research that has gone on has now led us to the point where they have been testing pellets in wood biomass, in coal-fired generating plants in the province of Ontario, for the better part of a year. The results are very good and encouraging. The thermal output from the plants is equal to or better than coal, depending on the pellet that's being burned. The handling systems are accommodating the biomass very well. The boilers are accommodating the biomass very well. I was pleased when, shortly after his appointment as Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, George Smitherman toured Atikokan with me and that particular plant. While it is no slam dunk yet, things look very positive in terms of our ability to convert that plant to biomass, at the same time remaining cognizant of our requirement to ensure that private industry has as much biomass as they require.



I wish I had more time, but I thank you for my 10 minutes this morning.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** It being close to 10:15, this House stands in recess until 10:30 later on this morning.

*The House recessed from 1012 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I'm pleased to introduce Shirley Csonto from Woodstock and her daughter and granddaughter, Teresa and Sarah Cameron, from Ingersoll. They are here today to visit Jordan Plummer, Sarah's cousin and one of our legislative pages. Although Jordan isn't from Oxford, her extended family has the fortune of living in one of the best ridings in Ontario. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** In the east members' gallery, I would like to take the opportunity, on behalf of Ajax's page Jordan Plummer from Westney Heights Public School in our Ajax-Pickering riding, to welcome her parents, Brenda and Jeff Plummer; her brother Andrew, with a slightly colourful hairdo; grandparents Ann and Gordon Plummer; as well as Jennifer and Suzanne Tewnion and Brad, Lianne and Ryan Page, who are joining us in the Legislature today.

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** This is Agriculture Day at the Legislative Assembly. We're delighted to have the Ontario Federation of Agriculture host this very important event.

In the gallery today, we have Bette Jean Crews, who is the president of the OFA; Don McCabe, who is the vice-president; Wendy Omvlee, an executive member; and Neil Currie, the general manager.

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** Today I would like to introduce William Birch. He's from the riding of Scarborough-Guildwood and he's a student at Seneca College.

## DECORUM IN CHAMBER

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd like to take a few minutes to caution the House once again about the use of intemperate language and general tenor of speech in this chamber. I have observed over the short period that this House has been convened an increased tendency towards disrespectful, insulting comments and insinuations directed from one member to another.

Recent question periods provide some troubling examples. Words like "stupid," "jerk," "bamboozle," "hoodwink" and "fabrications," along with references to booze cruises, pickpockets and bathroom breaks, do nothing to enhance decorum in this place or garner the respect of the citizens we serve.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I could name names, Mr. Minister.

Neither, frankly, does constant and repetitive heckling to the point where it is difficult or impossible to hear a colleague speak.

This is a place to put forward like and opposing viewpoints. That often brings with it an element of passion and sometimes antagonism. However, I think it is incumbent on all of us to treat each other with the kind of respect we ourselves expect to be treated with. Hurling insults and engaging in personal attacks debases this institution and casts a shadow on each of us.

We are all members of Ontario's provincial Parliament. We have been sent here to represent to the best of our ability a constituent of citizens who have the right to expect that, as their representatives in this place, we will conduct ourselves with dignity and honour. This does not, in my view, include the kind of schoolyard name-calling and derision that has become the trend of late.

I genuinely seek the co-operation of the House in maintaining a higher level of decorum in this place, each of us having due regard and courtesy for all honourable members and respect for the authority of the Chair. I know that each of you is capable of a higher standard.

As a footnote, given some recent incidents of disregard for the Chair, I also want to remind members that at any point in the proceedings, if the Speaker and a member are both standing, one of those two is out of order, and it's not the Speaker.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** A question to the Premier. Ontario families received the equivalent of a shot to the gut yesterday when they saw that the TSX had fallen to levels not seen in more than five years, the single lowest close since October 2003. These people have savings and pensions that many of them depend on, and what do they get on top of that from Dalton McGuinty? Nothing but higher taxes, higher user fees and higher energy prices. Now, this morning, they hear the Premier musing that you're going to further mortgage their future with potentially the highest deficit in the history of Ontario. Premier, tell us that's not true.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** We intend to run a deficit. I think we were the first province to announce that. We've been followed by the federal government through its actions. I expect that we'll see deficits in many of the Canadian provinces, and I'll tell you why we're going to run a deficit, for a few reasons.

First of all, we've been asked by international organizations like the G20 and the International Monetary Fund, and the Prime Minister himself, to do what we can to stimulate our economy. We will have to borrow money to stimulate the economy in that particular way, more so than we've been doing already. At the same time, we are going to protect the gains we have made in



our schools, in our hospitals and in our protections for the environment.

Finally, in addition to helping people today who need help, through our immediate stimulus package we want to begin to build a solid foundation for a future economy at the same time. All of those cost money. We have no choice but to do those things at this point in our history.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** While working families and seniors are seeing their life savings plunge, seeing their pensions at risk and seeing their home values decrease, they have forked record tax dollars over to the McGuinty government, only to see them frittered away. At this time last year we were heading for a \$6-billion surplus; now we find we may even be further than that into the red. Instead of setting aside any cushion whatsoever for tough times, you spent every single penny in one massive end-of-year spending spree. It's nothing short of shocking. From \$6 billion potentially in the black to \$6 billion in the red in less than one year: Premier, does that not represent extraordinary failure in leadership?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I know that my colleague has a different perspective on this than do I, but just by way of interest, I noticed that Alberta had an \$8-billion surplus last year. This year they are projecting, so far, a deficit of over \$1 billion. What my honourable colleague fails to recognize is that the world around us has changed, and it's had a profound impact on our economics here in Ontario.

We are going to use this budget to do what we believe Ontarians want us to do. They want us to stimulate the economy. They want us to create jobs in the short term. They want us to build a stronger economy, on a go-forward basis, that is there for us when we emerge from this global economic recession. They want us to protect our gains that we've made in our public services. They want us to help people who are up against it through no fault of their own whatsoever. Our budget will strive to do all of those things.

1040

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Premier, these are your own numbers over five years. You've benefited from a \$27-billion increase in revenues, largely from higher taxes and transfers from the federal government, and you blew it all, saving nothing for when times got tough. For five years, Premier, you had this province on cruise control. The results: Ontario is now a have-not province, with a have-not Premier. We're in a deep deficit, with the worst jobs record in Canada, and the Royal Bank says that our economy will shrink by 1.4% this year, the worst performance in over a decade. Dalton McGuinty's emerging bio: Honey, I Shrunk the Economy.

While other Premiers, Presidents and Prime Ministers have acted, all we're getting from Dalton McGuinty in the time of crisis is vacuous, vacillating and weak-kneed leadership.

Premier, will you finally—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you, Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** It may be that my honourable colleague is the only person in Ontario who thinks

that somehow the global economic recession can be sourced here, at Queen's Park. I just don't think anybody else believes that.

He certainly is not in agreement with the priorities that we've brought to bear during our first five years. We have invested significantly, that is true, in nurses, MRI and CT technologists, personal support workers for our long-term-care homes, home care workers, public health unit inspectors, water inspectors, meat inspectors and the like.

I want to quote from the federal Minister of Finance, who said the following: "Our government will be making a deliberate choice in this budget to run a substantial deficit. The deficit will be a temporary tool—one that allows our government to invest in a stimulus plan that injects money into our economy and delivers real benefits to Canadian families and businesses." I agree with the federal Minister of Finance.

## ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Let's review the Premier's legacy.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Who's the question to?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** To the Premier.

The Premier has become the first Premier in Ontario's history to make us a have-not province, receiving welfare payments from Ottawa. He has taken us to last in growth in Canada and in job creation. Now we hear today, potentially, that this Premier has succeeded in digging the biggest deficit in Ontario's history, to make Bob Rae look like a piker. Premier, is this not an extraordinary failure in leadership?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Let's review the facts, first of all. First of all, this is not the first time Ontario has qualified for equalization payments. Second of all, this government has invested in vital public services, and I'll remind the member we had—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Please continue.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'll remind the member that we have paid down \$3.2 billion in Ontario's debt. We have paid off \$2 billion in stranded hydro debt, and I'll remind him, unlike the government before us, every year, our expenditures did not grow as fast as revenue, yet we managed to restore health and education. Sir, let me re-emphasize: In this budget, we will continue to preserve those services in the context of a broad, global financial crisis.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I think the minister knows full well that, for the first time in history, Ontario is receiving equalization payments from the federal government. We're on the welfare rolls of Confederation because of Dalton McGuinty's failed economic policies.

What are the results since the last election? Ninety thousand private sector jobs gone. Dalton McGuinty has



stood by while almost 300,000 well-paying manufacturing jobs have fled our province in five years, that he characterized as just a little bit of a contraction.

Premier, you raised taxes through the roof on the backs of working families, seniors and small businesses. You went on end-of-year spending sprees. These decisions are yours, and yours alone. Isn't it time to take a new course to start creating jobs in the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** In fact, we have balanced budgets. We've paid off a \$5.5-billion deficit that we were left with from the previous government. We restored transparency and accountability in budgeting. But most important, we invested in those things that are the foundation, sir, of a growing and prosperous long-term economy.

Education is crucial to long-term growth. Infrastructure is crucial. A strong and sustainable public health care system is one of our key competitive advantages. As we've balanced budgets, as we've addressed these problems, we now confront a world financial crisis. I can assure you the plan we lay out on March 26 will deal with these immediate challenges, build growth into the future, and maintain and preserve those vital services which are the foundation of future economic growth.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** In the face of economic crisis, Dalton McGuinty is utterly paralyzed. The only time he ever moves is to point the finger of blame at someone else.

Harry Truman had a sign on his desk that said, "The buck stops here," because all real leaders understand that they ultimately must take responsibility for their decisions and make change where necessary.

The Premier had this province on cruise control for five years, failed to set aside any rainy day fund for when things got tough and refused to address a tax rate that has chased almost 300,000 well-paying manufacturing jobs from our province.

Premier, when it comes to the economy, when it comes to controlling your spending, you have one extraordinary failure in leadership. Isn't it time to bring forward a new course?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Real leaders like Premier McGuinty understand the importance of investing in health care and education for a strong future economy. Real leaders like Premier McGuinty understand that you have to strike a balance in all public policy. That's why we've cut business taxes—\$3 billion. That's why we've invested in skills training. That's why we started a fairness campaign for Ontario, to see that this province is treated fairly in the broader context of Confederation. And that is why this Premier and his government invested \$9 billion last year—the first province in Canada to have a stimulus plan. Seven billion dollars of that is now in the ground and has created 100,000 jobs, representing 1% of the gross domestic product.

We have more to do. We're going to build on that, we're going to preserve our public services, and we're going to see this economy back to growth, back to a future for our children that all of us can—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** New question.

## MANUFACTURING JOBS

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** My question is for the Premier.

Today, Vale Inco announced the layoff of 261 workers in Sudbury, with many more job reductions to come. Employment insurance claims are up 30% year over year, with some municipalities in Ontario having employment insurance claims up by more than 50%. More than 300,000 good manufacturing jobs have been destroyed in Ontario over the last four years.

New Democrats have outlined a five-point jobs plan. As thousands of Ontario workers lose their jobs every week, can the Premier tell us what the McGuinty Liberals' jobs plan is?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'd be only too delighted to speak to this once again.

The leader of the NDP knows a great deal about our five-point plan. He knows that it's in existence, but he just doesn't support it. That's unfortunate, because we've been doing a number of things that have been very helpful to Ontarians. For example, at this point in time, by investing billions of dollars in infrastructure like new schools and hospitals and roads and bridges and transit projects, we're creating thousands and thousands of jobs. But the NDP don't support that.

We're cutting business taxes by \$3 billion, and in particular, we're doing that in a way that's of special benefit to our manufacturers, by eliminating capital taxes. We're doing that right now, but the leader of the NDP does not support that initiative. I can tell you that those businesses and those manufacturers in particular support that.

Those are just two points of our five-point plan. It really would be helpful if at some point in time—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you, Premier. Supplementary.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** As hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs leave the province every year, the Premier says he's helping.

Let me give you an example of something you could do. The McGuinty Liberals fail to require Ontario manufacturing content for new green energy projects. In Quebec, 60% of the manufacturing has to happen in that province for new green energy projects. The McGuinty Liberals are satisfied with a 25% domestic manufacturing content requirement for new transit vehicles. In Quebec, it is 60%, and the manufacturing of new transit vehicles is happening in that province.

New Democrats want a strong Buy Ontario program that will create and sustain jobs in Ontario. Why don't the McGuinty Liberals?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** We do, and that's why, in fact, when it comes to our transit spending, 82% of our



transit investment is being spent in the province of Ontario. We expect that this will create 190,000 direct and indirect jobs. We're investing billions and billions of dollars in transit projects, particularly here in the GTA and beyond. There's another project we want to proceed with as soon as we can in Kitchener-Waterloo, and another one in Ottawa. There are all kinds of investments being made, and it would be helpful if at some point in time we had the support of the NDP in making these kinds of investments so we can create the jobs that flow from those very kinds of infrastructure projects.

1050

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** It's interesting that the Premier wants to confuse construction work with manufacturing work. It's not going to work, because here's the example: The Toronto Transit Commission is considering two bids for a streetcar contract that could ultimately be worth \$3 billion and tens of thousands of manufacturing jobs. One bidder, Bombardier, will make the streetcars in Thunder Bay, sustaining hundreds of good jobs in that community. The other bidder, Siemens, would do the majority of the manufacturing work in Europe. If Ontario had a 50% domestic manufacturing requirement for transit vehicles, as New Democrats advocate and as Quebec already has, we would see Ontario taxpayer money being used to sustain Ontario manufacturing jobs. Why is the McGuinty government satisfied with a modest 25% when the United States says 60%, Quebec says—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you, Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Sixty per cent sounds good, but I repeat, 82% of transit investment in the province of Ontario is being spent here. It's creating jobs right here where we need them.

It's interesting that the leader of the NDP stands in favour now of doing what we can to create jobs through investment in transit, but there was a time when he voted against our investments in subway and transit expansions. They were very unhappy with him at a particular plant in the city of Thunder Bay.

We will continue to do everything that we can to create new jobs in the province of Ontario and we will continue to ensure that 82% of our transit investment is in fact being spent here in Ontario, where it's creating jobs.

## POVERTY

**Mr. Michael Prue:** My question is to the Premier. The McGuinty government's new poverty reduction bill states that the implementation and success of the government's poverty plan depends on a growing economy.

Now that the Ontario economy has officially stopped growing and, according to most reputable economists, is likely to remain stagnant for some time, is the McGuinty government no longer committed to implementing its poverty reduction strategy?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** We are absolutely committed to doing what we can to help address poverty in the province of Ontario. We're proud of the strong start that we've made. We have a first-of-its-kind strategy in place; there's a specific target; we have legislation being passed in this Legislature. But we've made it clear from the outset that grappling with poverty, reducing poverty and ideally eliminating poverty is not something that the provincial government can do on its own. We need partners at the municipal level, in the voluntary sector, but I think most importantly, we need a partner at the federal government level. We also need the support of a growing economy.

We will continue to do more when it comes to moving forward on our poverty strategy, but again we're going to look to help from the federal government as well.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** The Premier has now stated that he and his government will do what they can. The Premier says that he is committed to implementing the strategy and achieving a 25-in-five target, yet the government's poverty plan states "meeting this target depends on having a willing partner in the federal government and a growing economy"—your words, not mine. Now Bill 152 says that even implementing this strategy depends on "the sustained commitment of all levels of government, all sectors of Ontario society and a growing economy." Again: your words, not mine. If the McGuinty government is so strongly committed to action on poverty, why does it keep linking action on poverty dependent on factors beyond your own government's control?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** That's part of leadership. I think it's part of helping Ontarians understand that while poverty has historically been seen as intractable, something that is part and parcel of the landscape, so to speak, we see it differently. We believe that something can be done that's real and meaningful to families who are affected by this. While we bring that perspective to it, we also understand that we can't do this on our own. We have made that clear from the outset.

The NDP in government didn't have any kind of formal strategy in place when it comes to addressing poverty. We have the first of its kind. We're proud of that, and we look forward to making more progress on a go-forward basis.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** People of many faiths are gathered in prayer today on the front lawn of this Legislature. Their message is that governments have to have a heightened responsibility to the most vulnerable citizens during difficult economic times. In Quebec, the Liberal government passed a poverty law with teeth and reduced poverty in that province by over 60%—not just children but everyone. When will the McGuinty government take the escape clauses out of Bill 152 and put into it a serious, long-term poverty reduction target dependent upon your own actions and not everyone else's?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Let me just talk a little bit about what we've done so far. I can understand why my



colleague remains doubtful, but I think Ontarians are entitled to know what we've done so far as evidence of our commitment to this.

We have been increasing the social assistance rate. It's up 9.3% since 2003. The NDP voted against raising those rates, by the way. We put in place a new Ontario child benefit that will cost us \$1.3 billion on an annual basis. It will be \$1,310 annually for 1.3 million children in the province of Ontario. We've increased the minimum wage five times so far. We've doubled the amount of money in our student nutrition program, helping out kids who are coming to school hungry.

Again I repeat: We have in place a strategy—the first of its kind. I would hope that at some point in time we have the support of the NDP as we move forward on this front.

### ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** My question is for the Premier. My constituents are concerned about the state of the province's finances. They were shocked to read that Don Drummond of the TD Bank is predicting that Ontario's deficit could explode to \$17 billion in the foreseeable future.

The Premier and his Minister of Finance have often said that the time to repair the roof is when the sun is shining. That's exactly why I introduced a motion back in the fall of 2003, right after the election, calling on the government to commit itself to a long-term plan to pay down the provincial debt based on the common-sense philosophy that in good years you pay down your debt so that you're in a stronger position when times get tough.

Could the Premier explain why every single Liberal MPP present voted against my resolution for even modest fiscal prudence?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The first thing we did was pay off the \$5.6-billion hidden deficit that that member and his party left. The next thing we did was, we paid down an additional \$3.2 billion in the provincial debt over the balance of our last three balanced budgets. Finally, we were the first government to pay down stranded debt from Ontario Hydro, more than \$2 billion over the course of our first and second mandates.

While we did that, we undid the damage that his party did to our vital public services. We rehired inspectors. We rehired nurses. We rehired teachers. We restored confidence in the broader public sector, and we made investments that will serve this province and its economy well, well into the future. We have more to do, and we will undertake that on March 26.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** No one is buying that. If the Premier has no explanation for his government's refusal to support a motion calling for modest fiscal prudence, I'll offer one.

His government couldn't wait to open the vault and spend: spend with abandon, spend with impunity, spend

like there was no tomorrow. Well, tomorrow is now here, and the Premier's facing a deficit that has paralyzed the government, delaying the budget by a full month.

Their program spending is up 50% since taking office. What do we have to show for it? Ontario taxpayers are paying more than \$1 million an hour to service this massive provincial debt that they've all but ignored. It's obvious that instead of fixing the roof, the Premier has put the province into a fix. How can he possibly claim to have any regard for future generations with this sorry record of fiscal recklessness?

1100

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We have more teachers, more doctors, better hospitals, better schools, among other things, and that's only a start.

Let me remind my friend and colleague that when the McGuinty government took office in 2003-04, the debt-to-GDP ratio was 25.2%. Today it's 18.1%. Let me tell him something else. During the last four years of his government, revenues rose far less than expenditure. They were spending money without the revenues. That's why they left a \$5.6-billion deficit.

Yes, we have proudly invested in restoring our vital public services that that member and his party cut, but we did it responsibly as we paid down debt and reduced our debt-to-GDP deficit.

There's more to do. March 26 is the beginning—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

### DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour le ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée. According to a study by the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences, wealthy Ontarians have benefited far more—38% more, in fact—than their poorer counterparts from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's wait times strategy on MRI. But we all know that poverty is the strongest determinant of sickness and poor health. Low-income Ontarians have more health problems and need the health system more. What is the minister going to do to ensure that low-income Ontarians have access to MRI?

**Hon. David Caplan:** I certainly welcome the findings of the report. I would like to thank ICES for the work that they do, because it highlights that we have, as a government, made the right investments to double the capacity for magnetic resonance imaging in the province of Ontario.

This government went to work right away, and we are working hard to increase access to MRI services for all Ontarians. The report makes it very clear that we are on the right track. Since elected, as I've mentioned, our government has doubled the number of MRIs offered in the province of Ontario. Thousands more Ontarians are undergoing these important diagnostic tests no matter what their income level.

As the ICES report outlines, MRI usage in Ontario's poorest neighbourhoods has actually increased by 80%



between 2003 and the present date, and I am proud of that accomplishment.

We are increasing access right across the board. We're funding approximately 160,000 additional MRI—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I remind the minister that the wait times have not gone down, but we'll agree that a whole lot of money has been invested. What I'm talking about is a gap between rich Ontarians and poor Ontarians. The government's ill-advised wait times strategy has not helped low-income Ontarians. Actually, factors other than medical needs are driving the decision to order MRIs. These facts are troubling.

Will the minister ensure that those who need MRI scans receive them regardless of their income?

**Hon. David Caplan:** The member presents factually incorrect information to this House. Wait times, in fact, are down 22% in this province, right across the board. I hope that the member will have the gumption to stand in her place and correct the record, because the wait times strategy that this government implemented is working.

We are seeing expansion of MRI right across the province of Ontario. In a previous government, Ontario's only French-language-speaking hospital was under a guillotine order. Under this government, not only has that hospital survived; it is now offering MRI services in the province of Ontario.

There have been 16 MRIs opened since 2003—three in the city of Ottawa; in Owen Sound, Richmond Hill, Markham, Halton, Windsor, Niagara Falls, Orillia, Guelph, Belleville, Cobourg, Brantford, Chatham and Hamilton—and there are more on the way.

It is because of the determined effort of this—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. On behalf of the farmers of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, I would first like to welcome and thank the representatives of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture who are here with us today for their inaugural Agriculture Day at Queen's Park.

The OFA is the largest general farm organization in Ontario, representing nearly 39,000 farm families. Members of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture are here to meet with MPPs to help us understand the issues and opportunities faced by the agricultural community during these challenging times.

I know, Minister, that you've been working closely with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and other partners in our agricultural sector over the past number of years. Could you highlight for this House and for our visitors today some of the accomplishments that we have achieved—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** We are certainly grateful for all of the good work of all of the farm agencies, not the least of which is the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. My job, of course, is to listen very closely to what they would bring to us. We have worked, I believe, very well in partnership over the years. They have made it very clear that their members expect this government to do all we can to support and promote the fine-quality food products that we have here in the province of Ontario. That is why we have established the Ontario Market Investment Fund, a \$12-million initiative. We are also investing \$56 million over the next four years on our Buy Ontario, Buy Local strategy.

I just want to say to the members of this Legislature that Bette Jean Crews, the president, indicated that, "Incentives provided to expand Ontario's buy-local initiatives have proven their value many times as society shows"—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** Mr. Speaker, agriculture, as you know, is the second-largest economic driver in Ontario, and it employs over 700,000 people in this province. Our government knows that Ontario farmers make significant contributions to our strong economy through innovation, new market opportunities and value-added products, but it cannot be forgotten that agriculture, like other sectors of the economy, is facing challenges during these difficult economic times. For a number of years, many farmers have experienced the challenges of low market prices and high input costs. I know our government has been there for the farmers during these challenging times and will continue to work with our farmers to ensure the industry remains a sustainable one for generations to come, including the next generation on our own farm in Middlesex county. Could the minister talk about other incentives our government has undertaken to support the agricultural industry since 2003?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** I'm delighted that the member has identified that agriculture is the second-largest economic driver. Our government has made sure we've invested since we've come to government: \$1.2 million over the past five years on farm income support; another \$50 million for the risk management program for grains and oil seeds producers; and \$150 million for the cattle, hog and horticulture payment to address the long-time hurt that there was in that industry. Our investments, along with the hard work of farmers, are paying off. Just last week in the National Post, an article, "An Engine for Economic Health"—it is the agriculture sector: "Equally important, Ontario farms are preserving the viability and even driving growth in smaller rural communities"—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Member from Renfrew, I would hope that you were listening to my statement earlier about long, prolonged heckling.

Minister, please continue.

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** Again, Mr. Hoskin has indicated that there has been growth in his region. In



Norfolk county, as a matter of fact, "He points out that gross farm receipts in his county grew by 6.8%.... While current figures are not available," it is estimated that "Ontario farmers pump about \$8.8 billion" into our provincial economy—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ENERGY CONSERVATION

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Glad to be here. To the Premier about the going-in-the-red energy bill: Yesterday, when I asked a question about how this bill was going to give government inspectors the power to go into businesses and private residences to look for audit documents, the energy minister said, "There is no opportunity for warrantless search." Section 15 of the bill allows inspectors to go into businesses without notice and without warrant.

Premier, has your energy minister even read his own bill? When the minister doesn't know—and he had to admit on Focus Ontario on the weekend that he has no idea where these promised jobs are going to come from—it doesn't give us a whole lot of confidence. Would you confirm that the minister was in fact wrong in his answer yesterday, and that your bill, his bill, will unleash energy audit inspectors on unsuspecting businesses here in the province of Ontario?

1110

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I don't know if we're talking about the same bill here. I think Ontarians are going to grow ever more enthusiastic about this bill. I think they want those 50,000 new jobs, I think they want clean and green electricity, and I think they want all of us to do more in the fight against climate change.

There have been some wonderful experiences in other parts of the world where they have moved forward with this kind of legislation. This is certainly the most aggressive of its kind in North America, and we're proud to be leading in that regard, but there are all kinds of job opportunities that will flow from this.

For example, when it comes to building transmission and distribution upgrades, there will be direct jobs in construction and indirect jobs in equipment supply, equipment manufacturing, engineering/design, transportation and conservation. There are all kinds of jobs in the construction trades, specialized professions, energy auditors, building and renovation, installation contractors, technicians and the like—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you, Premier. Supplementary?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Remarkably, I don't believe he answered the question.

Again, you have to wonder whether this government even knows if it's coming or going. Yesterday, both the Premier and the minister said that when it comes to the invasiveness of this bill, they are open to positive and constructive amendments. We're glad to hear that, be-

cause the news of a mandatory audit costing \$300 or more at a time when so many people cannot afford it is strongly opposed by seniors and struggling families. Premier, will you agree to amend the bill to defer mandatory audits, or is your promise to be open to amendments another one that is not to be believed by the people of Ontario?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, I want to remind Ontarians that this very commitment that we have made was one that was found in the Conservative Party platform, but as they like to say over there, that was then and this is now.

We think this is a good idea. We've always said we're looking forward to constructive and positive debate. We're looking forward to positive recommendations with respect to how we might improve this bill. We're very open to ideas, for example, as to when this might take effect. I know my friend understands as well that the government, at present, is providing a \$150 rebate, so the net cost is \$150. But as I say, we're open to constructive recommendations.

I think what Ontarians want to see from us are solutions, and they'd love to hear positive, constructive suggestions coming from the opposition. We're certainly very open to those too.

## DON JAIL

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** The question is to the Premier. Why won't the Premier and his Minister of Correctional Services accept the invitation to visit and tour the Don jail, the Toronto Jail, like Howard Hampton and I did last Friday?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Correctional Services.

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** Thank you, Premier, and I thank the member for the question.

We understand the challenges that are in our correctional institutions. That's why we've decided to build a new facility to replace the Don jail, unlike the previous NDP government, which took money out of correctional services, refused to build one new jail, and in fact chastised the correctional officers when they suggested that they should increase capacity. The fact of the matter is that we are doing something to improve the working conditions for correctional officers, unlike the NDP government that was in place from 1990 to 1995 that withdrew millions and millions and millions of dollars from the correctional services section of the Ministry of Community—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Chronic understaffing—and it doesn't take a new jail to address that; mentally ill inmates locked up in segregation cells because that's the only place to put them, screaming through the day and into the night, their urine leaking out of the cell from underneath the locked solid door: Is that the sort of thing that this minister is afraid to witness first-hand?



**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** The fact of the matter is, I've been and toured the Toronto Jail. I saw the working conditions. But I have to tell you, Speaker, and the people of Ontario that, over on the other side, with the NDP, we have people who profess to support correctional services officers, profess to want to increase the amount of money that they put into the correctional services section, but in fact, when they formed government, in 1993-94 withdrew \$20 million out of the budget, in 1994-95 withdrew \$13 million from their budget, in 1995-96 withdrew \$25 million from the correctional services budget, and did not increase capacity by one bed.

## MEDICAL RESEARCH

**Mr. Mike Colle:** My question is to the Minister of Research and Innovation. Yesterday, the front page of the Toronto Star, the Globe and Mail and papers across the world announced that Ontario researchers had scored a major breakthrough in stem-cell research. Dr. Andras Nagy and his team of scientists at Mount Sinai Hospital have discovered a safer way to make human skin cells act like stem cells, which could be used to help people with spinal cord injuries and diseases such as diabetes and Parkinson's.

Minister, given the great breakthrough that Dr. Nagy has made in helping people with diabetes, Parkinson's and spinal cord injuries, could you tell us how your ministry is helping to support such incredible researchers like Dr. Nagy making these world-renowned breakthroughs?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I want to thank my colleague for the question. For those of us who are suffering from disease and for those of us who know those who are suffering from disease, the future is brighter this week than it was last week. All of us in Ontario, and I think all of us in this House, are extremely proud of Dr. Andras Nagy and his team at Mount Sinai Hospital, who have just in months announced a fundamental breakthrough in stem-cell research, what experts are calling an elegant discovery. Their discovery, which was just published on Sunday in the journal *Nature*, unlocks the possibility of new medical therapies and provides hope for Ontario families that suffer from spinal cord injuries and diseases such as diabetes, cystic fibrosis and Parkinson's, unlocking the power of our own bodies to repair and regenerate ourselves. Dr. Nagy's team is part of some 10,000 scientists, clinical investigators and researchers in Ontario conducting some \$850 million worth of research, making Ontario the number one biomedical cluster in Canada.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Mike Colle:** These researchers are some of our great Ontario heroes.

Another article on the front page of yesterday's *Globe and Mail* speaks of the fear researchers across Canada are feeling as they look at Canada's ability to attract and retain research stars of the future. In these challenging economic times, it is more important than ever that jurisdic-

tions like Ontario draw world-class researchers. Researchers are attracted to the development of new infrastructure, but are not attracted by infrastructure alone.

In the United States, President Obama is investing \$10 billion to finance research. Ontario hopefully will not be pushed aside by this massive investment in the States but rather boost its own programs. Minister, what is the Ministry of Research and Innovation doing to ensure that Ontario will continue to attract the best and the brightest of these researchers right down the street at Mount Sinai?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I can assure the members of this House that one of the fundamental principles that we follow in our government in the Ministry of Research and Innovation is that we believe that it is science that drives our science decisions—not political science but science; scientific excellence. We're attracting researchers from around the world because of our commitment to scientific peer-reviewed excellence.

We welcome the move by new President Obama to commit to scientific excellence in his country and not allow political science to interfere with that work. We have been ahead of the curve. It's a great opportunity for Ontario, I think, because of our commitments that we've been making since 2005, for us to ride the wave of this new investment in the States to strengthen our collaborations with our friends to the south.

Because of work like Dr. Nagy's, we know that we are truly globally competitive. We reach out to all other—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

## SMALL BUSINESS

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I have a question for the Minister of Small Business and Consumer Services. Minister, small businesses are struggling in this province. They are suffocating under the burden of your new rules and regulations in these challenging economic times. It's like death by a thousand cuts. Your government seems to be picking off one sector at a time. Construction businesses will hurt with an \$11,000 WSIB tax. Lawn care companies will suffer with your politically motivated, not science-based, ban list. Also, Minister, I'm hearing from many small businesses unable to cope with your rapid minimum wage increase.

1120

What is more troubling to me is this is all being done at a time when our small businesses simply cannot afford it. Will the minister agree with the people on the ground and finally admit that small business is suffering in this province?

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** I want to thank the member for asking this question.

There's no doubt that the small businesses are having challenges, not just in Ontario or Canada but throughout the world. It is a global phenomenon because of our reliance on the US economy, and the US economy is having challenges in their construction sector, they are having challenges in their banking sector, and they're



also having challenges in their manufacturing sector. So the small businesses that provide services to the US, and also to a broader sector, are having some challenges.

I will be more than pleased to elaborate in the supplementary about what our government has actually done to support those small businesses. We are actually on the job, and we're doing a great job to support the small businesses.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Well, I think the minister is really out of touch. The US economy has nothing to do with all the new rules that you're bringing in.

Minister, small business is vital to Ontario's economy. Small business comprises 96% of all the businesses in the province of Ontario—96%. Small business is the job creator in this province.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business says that two out of three businesses surveyed find the overall burden of provincial regulations has increased in the past three years under your government. What's next on your hit list? I know you have the temp help agencies—Bill 139. Where's the minister on this issue? Why won't he defend and protect the interests of small business?

When will you, as the Minister of Small Business and Consumer Services, start to stand up for small business in this province?

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** It's one thing to ask questions in the House; the other thing is to actually do something about it.

Let me tell you, our government actually has worked very closely with the small business community. We have, in the manufacturing sector, a Smart program, which is being run by the CME, the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters association. It's a program to increase the productivity of the manufacturers.

We also have a program with the Yves Landry Foundation. Again, this is to look at their processes and provide the money for the training funds. We also assist them with their export access program, through the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, so that they can actually not look at the market just in the US but actually look at the markets across the globe so that they can be more successful in penetrating new markets.

In addition to that, we have the AMIS program, under which they can apply for money so that we can assist them with regards to their capital needs.

We have a lot of these programs, and we are working very closely with the small business community to address some of their needs.

## HOSPITAL SERVICES

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** My question is to the Premier. How does shutting down the emergency department at the Port Colborne hospital improve the quality of health care for the folks of Port Colborne and Wainfleet?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Health.

**Hon. David Caplan:** I understand that there's always anxiety whenever communities consider making changes to the way health care is delivered, but I want to stress that our government is committed to strengthening and improving health care in Niagara region.

I want to say to the member opposite that I am confident the local health integration board continues to act in the best interests of the people of Niagara, making decisions to ensure the sustainability of the Niagara health care system.

In Port Colborne, the LHIN has taken great care to ensure that the plan will result in safer and higher quality for the residents in the Niagara health system. The plan will ensure that patients get the care they need.

I want to quote the independent reviewer of that plan, Dr. Jack Kitts, in his final report to the LHIN. He said: "In critical cases it is vital that patients receive definitive treatment as quickly as possible. The ED at the Douglas Memorial site is unable to provide this service as it lacks the necessary diagnostic equipment and specialist"—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** The people of Port Colborne didn't make the decision to shut down that emergency room. That decision was made by this government's hand-picked, unelected LHIN.

The people of Port Colborne and Wainfleet built that hospital brick by brick and they've paid for its operation with their taxes, even more so now with this government's special health tax surcharge.

Why won't this government, the McGuinty government, listen to the people of Port Colborne and Wainfleet?

**Hon. David Caplan:** The facts are that I, as the member well knows, recently met with Mayor Badaway from Port Colborne, Regional Councillor Bob Saracino, and Wainfleet mayor Barb Henderson. I would quote Mayor Badaway where he said, "He thanked Port Colborne for coming forward"—referring to myself—"with positive, constructive suggestions on a way to address these very important health issues for rural communities such as the city of Port Colborne.... The minister acknowledged that what works in an urban environment was not always the best fit for rural application."

In fact, we've seen New Democrat governments close hospitals, as they did in Saskatchewan: 50 rural hospitals in that province. That's not the track record of this government. In fact, I thought that Regional Councillor Saracino put it very well: "He said"—referring to myself—"he recognized our concerns and the needs of the people and they are prepared to work with us here; he did give us that commitment." And I did.

## POLICE OFFICERS

**Mr. Pat Hoy:** My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Minister, public safety officers in our province face a monumental task: They keep us out of harm's way and keep our



families safe. I think all members in this House would agree that they do so with courage and integrity, but every day they face uncertain situations and certain danger, and they do so continually, without hesitation.

When a public safety officer dies in the line of duty, a community never fully heals from that wound. It lingers, and we are forever touched by it. My community has not been immune to tragedy. In June 2000, we lost Sergeant Marg Eve. Mourners turned out in the hundreds to pay tribute. Fellow officers came from across the province to pay their respects.

I know that everyone in this House would offer whatever support possible during this time. Would the minister tell us what the government does to support the families of fallen public safety officers?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** I want to thank the member for the question. He's right: The community never, ever truly recovers from the loss of a police officer. I know that in 1993, Constable Joe MacDonald was shot and killed, and in 1999, Rick McDonald from Sudbury was shot and killed. Our community has never, ever recovered from those two tragic deaths.

Because of the sacrifices made by those police officers, the Constable Joe MacDonald scholarship committee provides spouses and children of officers who die in the line of duty money for post-secondary education. It's no replacement for a husband, a son, a father, but what it does do is show the amount of caring that the people of Ontario, all sides, without partisan political stripe, have for our police officers, especially those who fall in the line of duty.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Pat Hoy:** I know that in the time that follows the loss of a public safety officer, the outpouring of support from the community is very much appreciated by the family, just as I know that the support of the families with scholarships for post-secondary education will help to ease their financial burden following that loss.

We all know that when a public safety officer is killed in the line of duty, a community comes together. We mourn together, not just in the community where the officer lived and worked, but all across this province.

I'm glad to know that Ontario's Constable Joe MacDonald committee helps support the families to ease the financial burden following the tragic loss of a loved one in the line of duty. I would also like to know whether there are any other ways the government recognizes the sacrifices made by our public safety officers. Minister, do we have any other ways to honour their memory?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** Thanks again for the question from the member. Yes, we have other ways. In memory of fallen police officers, the Legislature can now dedicate highway bridges and other structures to those who have courageously and unselfishly given their lives in the line of duty.

Here are some of the officers who have been honoured to date: certainly, Sergeant Margaret Eve from the member's riding, Ontario Provincial Police officer, Highway 401 at Highway 4; Senior Constable Jim McFadden from

the Ontario Provincial Police, Highway 401 at Merlin Road; Senior Constable Phil Shrive, Ontario Provincial Police, Highway 17 over Bonnechere River; and Constable Richard Verdecchia, Ontario Provincial Police, Highway 11 at Highway 141.

It is a small way for us to remember the enormous sacrifice—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you, Minister. New question.

1130

## RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ENERGY CONSERVATION

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** My question is for the Premier. Premier, in your answer today you said that you're looking forward to constructive suggestions as to how you could improve this bill. We're going to give you one right now.

Will you consider an amendment that would remove the mandatory provisions in your energy audit bill and make it voluntary instead of shoving it down the throats of homeowners and seniors who can least afford the \$300 cost? Will you consider, Premier, an amendment that will remove the mandatory provision of your energy audit bill?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** My honourable colleague knows this is a matter for consideration by the committee. I expect that through committee there will be a number of proposals that will be put forward to strengthen the bill. We look forward to considering those various proposals and to making changes that the committee, in its wisdom, deems appropriate to enhance the quality of the bill.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** We're looking forward to that, but I'd certainly like some sort of commitment today, Premier. When you look at the broad-brush approach, for example, your mandatory energy audit applies to homes that may be less than a year or two years old. It puts everything under one broad brush.

We're asking you for a reasonable amendment: Remove the mandatory provision of this audit, as it is unwieldy, it is unfair to seniors, it is unfair to those people who are losing their homes through no fault of their own but that they cannot afford to keep the home, let alone a \$300 tax bill by your government.

I'm asking you again: Will you remove the mandatory provision of this audit and make it voluntary, as we are suggesting?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I think I addressed that pretty explicitly in my first response, but I want to remind my honourable colleague about the commitment they made on page 48 of their platform. I want you to know that this issue of the energy audit was not to be optional. It specifically says, "We will require home energy audits before every sale of a house so that the market will reward homes which are energy-efficient." There was no sense of any option. There's no sense that



this might be something a seller might want to consider. It was going to be a requirement.

Again, we look forward to giving this full consideration, because apparently they've changed their minds over there. I think we should give this full consideration at the committee.

#### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. The Globe and Mail revealed that a Metrolinx document on public consultations suggested that the agency salt the session with supporters in an effort to quash public concern with transit proposals.

Does this minister, responsible for Metrolinx, believe that stacking public consultations is an appropriate way of engaging everyday Ontarians on transit proposals?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** As one who has been familiar with the New Democratic Party over the years, I know that they have never, ever stacked any public consultations.

*Interjections.*

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I'm aware of that, but that doesn't answer the member's question, he will say.

I can tell you that there was very widespread consultation that took place. People who were opposed to or in favour of any of the plans put forward had a wide opportunity. I'm pleased that they took advantage of the opportunity in very large numbers to come out to meetings, to submit written submissions to Metrolinx to ensure that a wide variety of opinions were presented before any decisions were made. I'm delighted that the process turned out that way, and that the plan that was evolved is one that has very widespread support—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** The minister's day job: He'd better stick to it, because stand-up comedy's not his gig.

Metrolinx appears to be hiring consultants with expertise in quashing public discourse, this at a time when residents along the Georgetown corridor are fighting to ensure that a Union-Pearson link benefits their community and doesn't harm their homes and important institutions like churches and schools. Given the contents of the consultation document, how can the public have any faith that Metrolinx actually will listen to them?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** First of all, I would say to the member that widespread consultation takes place before any of these matters are proceeded with. There's ongoing opportunity for them to make representations, and indeed, as a result of the representations that have been made, modifications to plans are made. So that wide consultation is there. It's the kind of consultation that I think Andrea Horwath, the other member for Hamilton, whom you don't support in the leadership—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** It is the kind of consultation that she wants. Unlike myself, who supported Dalton McGuinty at the convention vociferously, you're not supporting your fellow member's—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. The time for question period is ended. There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1136 to 1500.*

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** Joining us very, very soon in the west members' gallery will be a number of visitors from the Canadian Congenital Heart Alliance: Shelagh Ross, Avi Goldstein, Matthew Main, Toby Cox and John MacEachern; and from the adult congenital heart disease clinic at Toronto General: Dr. Erwin Oechslin, Jeanine Harrison, Nicole Bodner and Carole Ryan.

#### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

##### ONTARIO FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURE

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I'm pleased to rise to recognize the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, who are here today to hold Agriculture Day at Queen's Park. It's great to see so many of the members of the OFA board here to ensure that everyone is aware of the challenges that our farmers are facing. With more than 38,000 members, the OFA is the largest voluntary farm organization in the country and is a strong voice for our agricultural community.

I want to recognize Bette Jean Crews, who was elected as the new president of the OFA in November. I know that she will serve the agriculture community well and ensure that their concerns are heard.

Agriculture is the second-largest economic contributor in Ontario and the third-largest employer. With the many economic challenges our province is facing, it is especially important that we work together to keep our agricultural sector strong. The OFA and farmers across Ontario are looking to the government to do the fair thing in the upcoming budget and compensate farmers who have been negatively affected by their legislation, such as the Clean Water Act.

They're also asking the government to do more to encourage new farmers, such as allowing young farmers to get a farm business registration number based on projections of income, so they can qualify for government programs. The government needs to take steps to get more young people farming so that agriculture can continue to be a strong industry and a solid foundation for Ontario.

I hope to see all members at the OFA reception this evening to show our support for agriculture in Ontario.

##### EMILY TIEU

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** I rise today to share with this House the story of an incredible young woman I had



the opportunity to meet today. Emily Tieu of Kanata received the Ontario Junior Citizen of the Year Award from Lieutenant Governor David Onley a few minutes ago. Emily, who is just 11 years old and is sitting in the gallery, received this award for raising money for research into a very rare fatal enzyme disease called sialidosis.

There is only one case of this that has been discovered in Canada, but Emily was concerned about this young boy named Tyler, and therefore decided to do something about it. This disease is so rare that the government doesn't fund the research being done into it at McMaster University. Emily decided she could make a difference. First, she held a garage sale, where she sold her old toys and raised \$91. Since that first garage sale, Emily has raised more than \$12,000. She has spoken to the Nepean Rotary Club and Keller Williams Realty in Ottawa about this cause. Just last month, she spoke to almost 10,000 people at the Keller Williams Realty annual conference in Orlando, Florida. I hope she visited Disneyland at the same time.

I congratulate Emily on this award and thank her for her impressive contribution to our community, Ontario and Canada. I also want to thank the Ontario Community Newspapers Association for sponsoring this awards program and recognizing young people like Emily. I would like to add our congratulations to the other 11 recipients as well. I want to say how proud her mom, Carol, her dad, Phil, and her young brother, Malcolm, are of her. Congratulations all on a job well done.

#### AVRO ARROW

**Mr. Monte Kwinter:** February 20 was the 50th anniversary of the cancellation of the Avro CF-105 Arrow project. It was 50 years ago that the production of the world's most technologically advanced supersonic interceptor aircraft came to an abrupt end. This political decision to scrap the Arrow program cost over 40,000 jobs across Canada, including more than 14,000 jobs in the Toronto region.

Five Arrows were built and flew at speeds exceeding Mach 1, the speed of sound. One of them logged the maximum stabilized speed of Mach 1.98, which is twice the speed of sound. A sixth Arrow, the first Mark 2 model, was completed and was awaiting its new engines, the Orenda Iroquois. If it had flown, it would without doubt have set new world records, but it wasn't to be.

The government not only cancelled the program but ordered the scrapping of the five completed planes, plus the five that were in production. They also ordered the destruction of all blueprints, technical and research data, so that there would be no memory of the Arrow. The resulting brain drain made significant contributions to the US Apollo space program, which culminated in the first human landing on the moon, on July 22, 1969.

The Arrow's legacy, after a few decades, is the current global leadership position of Canada's aerospace industry, the fourth largest in the world.

On February 23, we celebrated the 100th anniversary of the first powered flight in Canada by J.A.D. McCurdy, with Alexander Graham Bell's famous Silver Dart, at Baddeck, Nova Scotia.

Last week, we also launched the new Canadian Air and Space Museum, formerly the Toronto Aerospace Museum, at Downsview Park in my riding of York Centre. The museum's star attraction is the only full-scale museum-quality Arrow replica in existence. Come and see it.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I just want to congratulate the honourable member on your successful surgery. It was a pleasure to see you being able to read that statement today without your glasses.

#### PESTICIDES

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Tomorrow, we understand, the Ontario Liberals will release the final list of banned products under the cosmetic pesticides act. Lawn care companies and farmers have been asking me why the environment ministry hasn't consulted with them to make the regulations more reasonable and why government has only consulted with supporters of the legislation.

To the minister: Time and again you've stood in this House claiming this legislation is for the children. I ask you: What kind of an example are you setting for children when you make the rules solely with an exclusive group?

Minister, I know you don't really believe in this legislation, but unless you speak up, it will be you who will face the music tomorrow. What will you tell the lawn care companies that are already struggling due to the economic crisis? Will the regulations be phased in for these businesses? How soon will they have to comply?

We know this government has problems with the illegal tobacco trade, due to high tax and overregulation. What do you think will happen with the pesticide products that are banned? What will this government do to stop pesticide products from being brought into Ontario from other jurisdictions, products that may well end up being sold out of the backs of trucks?

When will this government realize that banning things in this province is rarely the right answer?

#### CHILD CARE

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Last Friday, Hamilton's ROCK group, Raising Our Children's Kids, threw a surprise party for me. At the Hamilton East Kiwanis Boys' and Girls' Club, we celebrated our recent success in having temporary care assistance funding reinstated in the Hamilton area.

Many grandparents raising their grandchildren have been unjustly cut off TCA funding. Through ROCK's and other grandparent groups' strong advocacy, and the help of my staff, the municipality recognized the problem and reinstated their temporary care assistance.

Although we celebrated in Hamilton, the fight is not over. Legislation and directives have to be changed to



accurately define eligibility and the reality of these families. Many grandparents across this province are still struggling to get the TCA funding their grandchildren need. Organizations like ROCK, Grand-Parenting Again, Cangrands and Second Chance for Kids work tirelessly to make this happen.

This government and local municipalities should follow Hamilton's example, work with these organizations and reinstate temporary care assistance to the grandchildren and their grandparents who are so deserving of it.

1510

#### BY-ELECTION IN HALIBURTON— KAWARTHA LAKES—BROCK

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I rise today in astonished reaction to the high voter turnout in Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock.

I know that the by-election results are still two days away, but it appears that the voters have already spoken. A running poll in the local paper, the Lindsay Post, was set up as an informal marker of voter sentiment on the race. This poll, unfortunately, has become a source of local controversy. Their own reporter recently revealed that the polling numbers “indicate that someone feels strongly enough to take the time to skew the results.”

The poll was giving the voters an unofficial way of following voter sentiment until, on “Monday morning, the number of votes for Tory had skyrocketed to 89,463, giving him 66% of the total.” These numbers might just indicate a healthy democracy until one realizes that in the 2007 provincial election, the total number of votes cast for all candidates was only 48,599 votes.

Where did all this support come from, you ask? The only response coming from the paper's IT department—again, and I defer to the expert—was, “It appears someone has written a computer script to vote over and over.”

I know that all members on this side of the House wish Mr. Tory the best of luck. Just remember that you need more than a computer and a talented computer programmer to win an election.

#### CONGENITAL HEART DISEASE

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** I'm delighted to see that my visitors have now arrived from the Canadian Congenital Heart Alliance and the adult congenital heart disease clinic.

I rise today to highlight the issue of congenital heart disease, or CHD. A structural problem present at birth, CHD can include developmental problems with the heart, valves and blood vessels. The most common type of major birth defect, CHD requires lifelong monitoring and intervention in many adults. It affects one in 70 Canadian newborns, and there are currently 37,000 adult patients in Ontario. The Toronto General Hospital/University Health Network, as a world leader in this area, is home to the world's largest adult congenital heart disease clinic, headed by internationally renowned cardiologist Dr. Erwin Oechslin.

In speaking to this issue today I want to highlight the need for health and quality-of-life improvements for those dealing with CHD and, in particular, wish to recognize Mr. John MacEachern, a former resident of my riding who underwent Canada's first successful CHD surgery in 1945. He is now president of the Canadian Congenital Heart Alliance.

I wish to commend the medical professionals at the adult congenital heart disease clinic, the Canadian Congenital Heart Alliance and all those who work tirelessly to promote awareness of this important health issue.

#### FREEDOM OF INQUIRY AND EXPRESSION

**Mr. David Zimmer:** In Ontario, equality is champion. Multiculturalism is held in the highest regard, human rights are enshrined in our legislation, and minorities are celebrated. Our province's diversity has meant that we have conscientiously built a society that demands equal treatment of all religious and ethnic communities. This expectation, this right of all Ontarians, protects all our religious institutions, our cultural institutions and our educational institutions. Schools and universities are no exception.

Universities perform best when they stimulate new and innovative research, enable professors to teach and inspire students to learn, all in an atmosphere of civility, diversity, equity and respect consistent with the tenets that provide the foundation of this great province. A guiding principle of conduct for Ontario universities is the understanding that every member of a university's community has a right to equitable treatment without harassment or discrimination. I believe that Ontario's universities are committed to providing students with an environment conducive to freedom of inquiry and expression.

I'm sure we all agree that, as a province, our diversity is our strength and that we are stronger when we all work together. Let us ensure that these principles are respected and upheld at all times in all of Ontario's educational institutions.

#### NURSE PRACTITIONERS

**Mr. David Oraziatti:** I rise in the House today to share some great news about an exciting health care initiative that will benefit the residents in my riding of Sault Ste. Marie.

Recently, I had the privilege of announcing that our government is creating a new nurse practitioner clinic at Sault College. The clinic will benefit thousands of local residents, who will now have greater access to primary health care, as nurse practitioners are able to treat common illnesses and injuries and order lab tests, X-rays and other diagnostic tests. The Sault College clinic will include nurse practitioners, on-site physicians, consultative physicians and other health care professionals, who could include pharmacists, dietitians and social workers.



The creation of this nurse practitioner-led clinic will relieve pressure on the Sault Area Hospital and provide support for local health care professionals. It marks a historic step in improving patient care, as we are the first province in Canada to implement this tremendously positive initiative. I want to congratulate the Sault College group. I know that the clinic will be a success, as our government will work to ensure that the health care providers have the resources they need to deliver care to patients in our community despite the challenging economic circumstances.

The Premier and Minister Caplan have shown tremendous leadership on this new health care initiative, which will continue to be expanded across Ontario, and our community appreciates their efforts. This step also builds on our government's commitment to increase access to primary care, which has resulted in the first new medical school in Canada in more than 30 years, an increase in medical school spaces and more than double the number of foreign-trained physician spaces. This is more good news on the road to providing every Ontarian with timely access to primary care.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### ANIMAL PROTECTION

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today to announce that the Provincial Animal Welfare Act has been proclaimed and went into effect on March 1, 2009.

The Provincial Animal Welfare Act marks the first comprehensive changes to Ontario's animal protection legislation since 1919. It modernizes and strengthens the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, gives Ontario the strongest animal protection legislation in Canada and makes Ontario the only jurisdiction in Canada to specifically extend these protections to include law enforcement animals.

The need for strong animal protection has been well documented in this House: dogs left in sweltering cars by their owners, the existence of puppy mills, wild animals escaping from badly maintained roadside zoos, and a Toronto Police Service horse intentionally struck down by a reckless motorist.

Two weeks ago, we learned of the bust of a barbaric cockfighting ring operating in York region. Seventy-four birds had to be destroyed and six more were found dead—for the purpose of cruel and senseless gambling.

Ontario's animals must be protected from the few who would do them harm, and tough penalties must await anyone who may cause or permit distress to an animal. For the first time, Ontario is protecting our animals with legislation that has real teeth.

The Provincial Animal Welfare Act includes new animal protection and investigation powers. For example, the OSPCA inspectors now have the authority to enter

zoos, circuses, petting farms and any other property where animals are kept for exhibition, entertainment, boarding, hire or sale. Just as doctors are required to report suspected cases of child abuse or domestic violence, veterinarians are now required to report suspected cases of animal abuse and neglect, and will be protected from personal liability for doing so.

The act has established new provincial offences to protect animals, including a specific offence for causing harm to a law enforcement animal. This is the first of its kind in Canada. So far we are the only jurisdiction in Canada to have this type of legislation, and it backs up these new offences with strong penalties, including fines of up to \$60,000, possible jail time and a potential lifetime ban on further ownership of animals.

Finally, the act also recognizes that the vast majority of Ontario's hunters, fishermen and farmers conduct themselves in a responsible manner, and has set out appropriate exemptions for these practices.

I am pleased to add that the Provincial Animal Welfare Act has earned the support of such respected organizations as the College of Veterinarians of Ontario, the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association, the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and the World Society for the Protection of Animals.

1520

The McGuinty government cares about animals and is a strong supporter of those who are dedicated to their care and protection. We have more than quadrupled the annual funding to the OSPCA to support the training of animal cruelty investigators. We have invested an additional \$6.8 million for the modernization of the OSPCA infrastructure and to offset the financial pressures brought by a growing demand for its services.

Our government will continue to work with our partners to ensure that Ontario remains diligent in our protection of animals and vigorous in dealing with their abusers.

This is a good day. I ask every animal owner in the province of Ontario to not only celebrate this good legislation but to support the member from Kitchener-Conestoga, Leanna Pendergast, in her quest to make sure Woolwich is the Hockleyville of Canada again.

### ANIMAL PROTECTION

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Last summer, I attended public hearings on what is now the Provincial Animal Welfare Act. The legislation still raises some questions for rural and northern Ontario. They are concerned about the slippery slope; it's always in people's minds in dealing with Mr. McGuinty's government.

One area of concern with respect to this animal welfare legislation is to what extent it may be used in the future to compromise one's right to hunt or fish or engage in normal farm or animal husbandry practices, in spite of the promise we just heard of the exemptions. However, the minister said he will continue to work on this issue with respect to animals.



I recall that various deputants to the standing committee on justice stressed that the legislation must not apply to wildlife and activities including hunting and fishing, including hunting with dogs. These activities and animals are presently under the purview of the Ministry of Natural Resources. It was felt that the OSPCA, if this was the government-sanctioned agency, should not be involved and have control over or interfere in any way with these kinds of activities.

As well, there was concern with respect to the vague wording in the legislation. Perhaps a lack of understanding of normal farm practices could lead in the future to impractical expectations or orders on farmers.

A case in point: discussion around the definition in the legislation of the word "distress." I quote: "... the state of being in need of proper care, water, food or shelter or being injured, sick or in pain or suffering or being abused or subject to undue or unnecessary hardship, privation or neglect." That definition, to some, was felt to be highly subjective and of concern if the legislation applies to all animals in Ontario: domestic pets, zoo animals, wildlife or farm animals. Today's farms host a wide variety of animals. Their requirements and their needs for water, food and shelter vary differently. Appearances can be deceiving. Also, even some veterinary procedures or treatments may cause distress.

It was pointed out during those hearings that the bill states, "No person shall train an animal to fight with another animal or permit an animal that the person owns or has custody or care of to fight another animal." Now, farmers with livestock on pasture—I think of sheep in particular—often are required to use one or more dogs to protect their flock; I know we certainly did. You have issues with coyotes, wolves and bears in some parts of Ontario. The question is, how would this section be applied if a farmer is using guard dogs to defend their livestock? There's a legitimate concern, especially if you're fighting off predators, trying to protect calves or lambs or mature sheep.

As we receive royal assent, I think of the royal family's involvement, their love of livestock, their love of hunting. We know that dogs are used legally in various forms of hunting in this province. It's not beyond the scope of possibility that in the pursuit of an animal during the hunt, that dog could come in conflict with another animal.

Thus, the committee, and these are during the hearings in London, received a proposal that the bill be amended: "No person shall train an animal to fight with another animal or permit an animal that person owns or has custody or care of to fight another animal," and here it's specific, "for the purposes of competition or entertainment," as in the cock fighting that was just mentioned this afternoon.

A number of presenters to the committee advocated that the legislation be voted down or amended to protect these traditional practices between human beings and other animals. Concern was expressed that the animal rights agenda would be promoted through this legislation, perhaps under the guise of animal welfare. There was a

need for more consultation on the development of these hosts of regulations—the feeling that that was not there. The big worry for the future, as this minister continues to work on animal issues: Where are we on the slippery slope?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. I appreciate that there are conversations that are taking place, but I would just ask the honourable members if they could lower the tone of those conversations a bit, or, if you must, use the outer chambers.

Responses?

## ANIMAL PROTECTION

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** And a fine admonition that was, Speaker.

I suppose I should first indicate that the Solicitor General, the Minister of Community Safety, has leaned on me—it didn't take too much leaning—and, in view of the fact that I'm going to tear a strip off of him in a couple of minutes, I will accommodate him and his colleague Leeanna Pendergast from Kitchener-Conestoga. You see, Tim Hudak worked hard to make Lincoln the Ontario candidate for this nationwide Hockeyville contest. Lincoln lost out—

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Narrowly.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** —to Woolwich.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** We want a recount.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** We down in Niagara feel that it wasn't necessarily the best ref's call, but we'll live with it. It would be a shame for an Ontario community not to be considered in this way. I'm very disturbed by the little promotion that says, "Vote often." Voting is unlimited—

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** It is CBC.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** —but then again, it is CBC, as Mr. Hudak points out.

I too encourage people to vote Woolwich. Go online: [woolwichhockeyville.ca](http://woolwichhockeyville.ca). And today's the last day, effectively—tomorrow midnight. So vote Woolwich, and if you don't know how to do it, call Leeanna Pendergast's office in Kitchener-Conestoga and keep her staff occupied.

Talk about flogging something. I don't mind flogging the "Vote Woolwich," but how many more announcements are you going to get out of the passage of this bill? For Pete's sake, we supported it. I can't recall the last time a minister stood up and made a ministerial statement on the fact that a bill has been proclaimed. "Flogging a dead horse," I suppose, is not the best choice of words in the context of the legislation. We supported it. How many more times are they going to do this? They are desperate, these guys, the Liberals, to somehow find good-news stories, although I doubt if there will be press pickup on this, to the chagrin of the Solicitor General.

I do want to acknowledge the work that Cheri DiNovo from Parkdale-High Park did on the committee, because, although this was technically within my critic portfolio, she very much wanted to be active in the consideration of the bill. She worked very hard on it and regrettably



cannot be here today. She tried very hard to do the response to the ministerial statement.

I still very much regret that my friend David Zimmer, who presented a very, very important private zoo regulation bill—I very much regret that that bill wasn't incorporated into this legislation. The government, the Premier's office—and it isn't the Solicitor General. He doesn't make those calls. The Premier's office makes those calls; they call those shots. Heck, Pierre Trudeau said that a backbencher, once he or she was 15 minutes away from Parliament Hill, was a nobody. Over the course of 25 years, a cabinet minister sitting in their seat is more often than not a nobody in view of the fact that there's so much power concentrated in the Premier's office. All the vetting and the control comes from the whiz kids, the brain trust, the minions in that office. For the life of me, I don't know what David Zimmer has done to the Premier to not have his very important zoo regulation bill acknowledged.

1530

I understand that this bill applies to zoo animals. I've become increasingly opposed to the concept of private zoos in any event. For the life of me, I don't know what business the private, for-profit sector has in running a zoo, a commercial zoo, for the purpose of generating profit. Our public zoos are interesting experiments in ensuring the survival of certain species of animal and continue to become less relevant as a showcase for animals as they are for research and the survival of the species. That's probably as it should be.

The incredible response to the Zimmer proposition about zoo regulation was, well, incredible. Across North America, people clamoured for it. I would ask this government to very, very seriously—the days of these dusty roadside attractions are really dated. I understand why a private sector operator may want to maintain a zoological facility specifically for research, again, for the breeding of particular species; I understand that. But roadside commercial zoos as a tourist attraction are as dated as can ever be. They tore down Crystal Beach years ago, to my regret. But if Crystal Beach is no longer relevant, then certainly these dusty roadside zoos are really no longer relevant.

The other issue, of course, is funding. Down where I come from, animal control officers are scarce. Municipalities don't have the funding. You've got coyotes eating chihuahuas down there in the Beaches. Mind you, the people of the Beaches say, "Please don't shoot the coyotes." But I suppose that's a Beaches phenomenon, and I shouldn't be critical. Here we are. I say, fine and good. Let's see what happens next.

## PETITIONS

### PROTECTION OF MINORS

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** I have received petitions from Alec and Lisa Bilty of London, Ontario, and Ms. Clark of Cambridge, that read:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there is no law in Ontario prohibiting pornography and other sexually explicit material from being viewed on computers in public schools and libraries; and

"Whereas there are public schools and public libraries that do not use Internet filtering software on computers that blocks such inappropriate material; and

"Whereas parents in the province of Ontario have the right to ensure that their children are protected from pornography and other inappropriate material available on the Internet in their public schools and libraries;

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows: That all public schools and libraries in Ontario be required to install Internet filtering software on computers to avoid the screening of sites of inappropriate, explicit sexual content."

As I agree with the contents of this petition, I sign on the face thereof.

### SALES TAX

**Mr. Pat Hoy:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the auto industry in Ontario and throughout North America is experiencing a major restructuring; and

"Whereas the current economic crisis is affecting the auto manufacturers and the front-line dealerships throughout Ontario; and

"Whereas many potential automobile purchasers are having difficulty accessing credit even at current prices; and

"Whereas a three-month tax holiday of the GST and the PST on the purchase of new and used cars and trucks would stimulate auto sales;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the provincial and federal governments to implement a three-month tax holiday, and that the Ontario Minister of Finance include the PST holiday in the next provincial budget."

This is signed by a number of residents from Tilbury and Leamington, and I have signed it as well.

### PROTECTION OF MINORS

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** I have a petition received from the Reverend Robert Merritt of Cambridge.

"Whereas there is no law in Ontario prohibiting pornography and other sexually explicit material from being viewed on computers in public schools and libraries; and

"Whereas there are public schools and public libraries that do not use Internet filtering software on computers that blocks such inappropriate material; and

"Whereas parents in the province of Ontario have the right to ensure that their children are protected from pornography and other inappropriate material available on the Internet in their public schools and libraries;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows: That all

public schools and libraries in Ontario be required to install Internet filtering software on computers to avoid the screening of sites of inappropriate explicit sexual content.”

As I agree with the contents of this petition, I’ve signed them.

#### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I have a petition that’s been sent to me by some of the patients of Dr. Bard, who practises medicine at the Credit Valley Medical Arts Building on Eglinton Avenue in Mississauga. It’s addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas wait times for access to surgical procedures in the western GTA area served by the Mississauga Halton LHIN are growing despite the vigorous capital project activity at the hospitals within the Mississauga Halton LHIN boundaries; and

“Whereas ‘day surgery’ procedures could be performed in an off-site facility, thus greatly increasing the ability of surgeons to perform more procedures, alleviating wait times for patients, and freeing up operating theatre space in hospitals for more complex procedures that may require post-operative intensive care unit support and a longer length of stay in hospital;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care allocate funds in its 2008-09 capital budget to begin planning and construction of an ambulatory surgery centre located in western Mississauga to serve the Mississauga-Halton area and enable greater access to ‘day surgery’ procedures that comprise about four fifths of all surgical procedures performed.”

I am pleased to sign and support this petition and to ask page Jacob to carry it for me.

#### DIABETES TREATMENT

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** I have a petition provided to me by Dr. Robert De Miglio.

“Whereas elementary school-aged children in the province of Ontario suffering from diabetes require regular blood sugar monitoring and may also require insulin and glucagon to manage their disease; and

“Whereas there is no medical or nursing assistance readily available in schools as there was in the past; and

“Whereas the parents/guardians of these children must currently visit their children’s schools several times throughout the day in order to test their child’s blood sugar levels; and

“Whereas the absence of medical support in our elementary schools results in substantial stress and disruption to the lives of children and their working parents;

“We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“(1) That elementary schools in the province of Ontario have on-site staff trained in the daily monitoring

of blood sugar levels of children who suffer from diabetes; and

“(2) That the trained staff also administer insulin and glucagon when required, with the consent of the child’s parent/guardian.”

As I support this petition and will be introducing for second reading on Thursday a bill to cure this problem, I affix my name thereto.

#### CHILD CUSTODY

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I have a petition from a number of residents from my riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, and it reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“We, the people of Ontario, deserve and have the right to request an amendment to the Children’s Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children’s relationships with their parents and grandparents.

“Whereas subsection 20(2.1) requires parents and others with custody of children to refrain from unreasonably placing obstacles to personal relations between the children and their grandparents; and

“Whereas subsection 24(2) contains a list of matters that a court must consider when determining the best interests of a child. The bill amends that subsection to include a specific reference to the importance of maintaining emotional ties between children and grandparents; and

“Whereas subsection 24(2.1) requires a court that is considering custody of or access to a child to give effect to the principle that a child should have as much contact with each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child; and

“Whereas subsection 24(2.2) requires a court that is considering custody of a child to take into consideration each applicant’s willingness to facilitate as much contact between the child and each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child;

“We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Children’s Law Reform Act as above to emphasize the importance of children’s relationships with their parents and grandparents.”

As I agree with this petition, I shall sign it and sent it to the clerks’ table.

#### DIABETES TREATMENT

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas elementary school-aged children in the province of Ontario suffering from diabetes require regular blood sugar monitoring and may also require insulin and glucagon to manage their disease; and

“Whereas there is no medical or nursing assistance readily available in schools as there was in the past; and

“Whereas the parents/guardians of these children must currently visit their child’s school several times through-



out the day in order to test their child's blood sugar levels; and

1540

"Whereas the absence of medical support in our elementary schools results in substantial stress and disruption to the lives of children and their working parents;

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"(1) That elementary schools in the province of Ontario have on-site staff trained in the daily monitoring of blood sugar levels of children who suffer from diabetes; and

"(2) That the trained staff also administer insulin and glucagon when required, with the consent of the child's parent/guardian."

As I support the contents of this petition and will be moving second reading of a bill to cure this problem, I affix my name thereto.

#### BATHURST HEIGHTS ADULT LEARNING CENTRE

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I have a petition from the students and staff at the Bathurst Heights Adult Learning Centre.

"Whereas there are over 2,000 adult ESL students being served by the Bathurst Heights Adult Learning Centre, operated by the Toronto District School Board, in partnership with the province of Ontario; and

"Whereas this is the only English-as-a-second language (ESL) learning centre in this area of the city," located directly on the subway; and

"Whereas newcomers to Toronto, and in the Lawrence Heights area, need the Bathurst Heights Adult Learning Centre so they can succeed in their career opportunities ...

"Therefore we, the undersigned, request that any revitalization of Lawrence Heights include a newcomer centre and ensure that the Bathurst Heights centre continues to exist in the present location" of Lawrence and Allen Road.

I support this petition and I'll affix my name to it.

#### SALES TAX

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I have a petition entitled "Implement a Sales Tax Holiday for Vehicle Sales," an idea that was brought forward to me last November by Allan Hedley of Hedley Seeds in Canfield. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas potential automobile customers in North America are having trouble accessing credit and loans; and

"Whereas the automotive industry is having difficulty selling vehicles;

"We, the undersigned, petition provincial, federal and state governments to implement a sales tax holiday on the purchase of new and used cars and trucks."

We have signatures here from the Waterford, Dundas, Simcoe and Delhi areas, and I affix my signature to this.

#### INTERPROVINCIAL BRIDGE

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas:

"(1) ROCHE-NCE, a consulting firm hired to study potential sites for an interprovincial crossing between Ottawa and Gatineau, is recommending that an interprovincial bridge across the Ottawa River be built at Kettle Island, connecting to the scenic Aviation Parkway in Ottawa, turning it into a four-lane commuter and truck route passing through downtown residential communities;

"(2) Along the proposed route are homes, seniors' apartments, schools, parks, the Montfort Long Term Care Facility and the Montfort Hospital, all of which would be severely impacted by noise, vibration and disease-causing air pollution;

"(3) A truck and commuter route through neighbourhoods is a safety issue because of the increased risk to pedestrians and cyclists and the transport of hazardous materials; and

"(4) There are other, more suitable corridors further east, outside of the downtown core, which would have minimal impact on Ottawa residents;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To reject the recommendation of a bridge at Kettle Island and to select a more suitable corridor to proceed to phase two of the interprovincial crossings environmental assessment study."

I concur with the petition and send it to the table by way of page Reed.

#### LUPUS

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I am pleased, on behalf of my seatmate, the very hard-working member for Niagara Falls, to present this petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas systemic lupus erythematosus is under-recognized as a global health problem by the public, health professionals and governments, driving the need for greater awareness; and

"Whereas medical research on lupus and efforts to develop safer and more effective therapies for the disease are underfunded in comparison with diseases of comparable magnitude and severity; and

"Whereas no new safe and effective drugs for lupus have been introduced in more than 40 years. Current drugs for lupus are very toxic and can cause other life-threatening health problems that can be worse than the primary disease;

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to assist financially with media campaigns to bring about knowledge of systemic lupus erythematosus and the signs and symptoms of this disease to all citizens of Ontario.

"We further petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to provide funding for research currently being undertaken in lupus clinics throughout Ontario."

I'm pleased, on behalf of the member for Niagara Falls, to sign and support this petition and ask my page Andrej Rosic from Streetsville to carry it for me.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### POVERTY REDUCTION ACT, 2009

### LOI DE 2009 SUR LA RÉDUCTION DE LA PAUVRETÉ

Ms. Matthews moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 152, An Act respecting a long-term strategy to reduce poverty in Ontario / Projet de loi 152, Loi concernant une stratégie à long terme de réduction de la pauvreté en Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Does the minister choose to lead off the debate?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Yes, I do. I am sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, the member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex.

It is a great privilege to stand in this House today with the opportunity to move debate forward on a landmark piece of legislation. The Poverty Reduction Act is our next step in the commitment to reduce poverty in Ontario. It is a commitment we made when we launched Breaking the Cycle, Ontario's first-ever poverty reduction strategy, last December. We are honouring that commitment now.

To be clear, this legislation is about the long term. In December, we laid out a five-year plan, but we acknowledged that much more needs to be done. If passed, the Poverty Reduction Act would ensure that future governments will be required to continue the work that we have begun, to set out strategies and targets to reduce poverty for generations to come.

Reducing poverty is the right thing to do. It is also the smart thing to do, because in order for Ontario to succeed, we need everyone at their best, everyone contributing, everyone working together.

We are committed to making sure that Ontario remains the province of boundless opportunity, where everyone has the chance to succeed, regardless of where they start in life. That is the ideal that sits at the heart of what will be the first poverty reduction strategy, Breaking the Cycle.

I rise today to speak to the Poverty Reduction Act, but I would also like to speak to the process that led us here, the process that led us to the creation of Ontario's first-ever poverty reduction strategy.

I had the extraordinary experience of consulting broadly across this province on how to build a long-term poverty reduction strategy. I have to tell you that I'm very pleased that so many members of this Legislature

decided to embrace the question: How do we reduce poverty? How do we improve opportunity in this province?

We heard from a wide range of people—front-line service providers, experts—but, most importantly, we heard from people who are living in poverty, people who have first-hand experience with the challenges related to poverty. They offered unique, creative ideas about tackling poverty. They offered innovative solutions, and they offered some breathtaking real-life stories.

But more than any one idea or story, the consultation process showed me that the only way we're ever going to succeed in the fight against poverty is for it to become a core responsibility of governments now and in the future. If passed, the Poverty Reduction Act will ensure that the dialogue continues not just over the course of this government's mandate or the next but over the long haul.

We're aiming to stand together in this House one day and proudly proclaim that we have worked together, we have kept the conversation going, and we have succeeded in our goal of reducing poverty.

We do have to be realistic. The day may not come as soon as we all would like. It's going to be tough work over the long haul and the burden of this global economic crisis is going to make things tougher. But we have a concrete plan to get there now and the legislation to keep us on track well into the future.

#### 1550

The preamble of this proposed legislation includes our first target of reducing the number of children living in poverty by 25% over the next five years. That would not only raise the standard of living of all children and their families who are living in poverty but it would raise 90,000 children out of poverty altogether. We will meet that target by moving forward with the initiatives set out in the Breaking the Cycle strategy we launched this past December. It's a plan that requires participation of our partners, of the federal government. It is a target that requires a growing economy, and we are all committed to doing whatever we can to ensure that happens. It's a plan that will allow us to take the next step in the Ontario we have been building together over the past five years.

We're boosting the landmark Ontario child benefit to give low-income families the financial support they need to provide essentials like food and shelter for their children. I have to tell you that in my consultations, I heard over and over again that what we need to reduce poverty is to make sure that people in poverty have more money. The Ontario child benefit does exactly that. The benefit also makes it easier for people to leave social assistance for work, because low-income children will receive it regardless of whether or not their parents are working. So it transforms social assistance, as well as puts more money in the hands of low-income families.

By the time our strategy is fully implemented, 1.3 million children in low-income families will receive up to \$1,310 a year per child. This initiative, in combination with the minimum wage increases that are coming, means that the total income of a single parent with two



children, working full-time at minimum wage, will be 54% higher than it was in 2003. Their family income will have gone from under \$20,000 to over \$30,000 because of the initiatives that we have taken. That means more stable housing for those families. That means fewer moves to different schools. It means more nutritious food. It means more opportunities for kids to participate in the activities that we like to give to our children.

We're also building on the signature investments we've made in education. We believe there is no better poverty reduction strategy than strong, publicly funded education. We're going to build on our progress by investing in supports for low-income families, outreach programs for youth, summer jobs for youth, and after-school programs, and expanding the student nutrition program.

That's the background on how we got here, but I'd like to speak to where we are going. I'd like to speak to the proposed legislation, which will take us on a long-term journey to reduce poverty in Ontario for governments and for generations to come.

The Poverty Reduction Act, if passed, would hold future governments responsible for reducing poverty by requiring the government to report annually on key indicators related to poverty and opportunity. These indicators would typically include income, school success, health and housing.

This legislation requires future governments of Ontario to develop a new strategy, to renew the commitment—to set a new strategy with a specific target every five years.

Lastly, it would mandate future governments to consult with Ontarians, specifically with people living in poverty, as they develop their future strategies.

On a momentous occasion like this, I know it's tempting to focus all of our energy on the exciting new opportunities that are ahead. But it's also worthwhile looking back at how far we have come together, to remind ourselves what the political discourse looked like not so long ago.

I'm pretty sure that we can all agree that 10 years ago, no one was holding out much hope that the government of the day was going to act on poverty reduction. No; in 1998, the very services that for so many people make the difference between struggling day in and day out or having the ability to live a dignified and decent life were being torn down.

Let's move forward a bit. Where were we five years ago? Well, our government had just been elected. We were planning how to rebuild the very services that had been torn down: building our health care system, our education system, our social services—and, while we made some important progress, it wasn't enough. People were still struggling. Too many kids were facing too many barriers to success. We knew we needed to do more.

This legislation is about making sure that we and all future governments do just that. The proposed legislation requires that all future strategies be built on a vision of a

province where every person has the opportunity to achieve his or her full potential in a prosperous and healthy Ontario. Future strategies must be guided by the following seven principles:

(1) That there's untapped potential in Ontario's population that needs to be drawn upon by building supports and eliminating barriers to full participation by all people in Ontario's economy and society;

(2) That strong, healthy communities are an integral part of poverty reduction, that their potential must be brought to bear on the reduction of poverty;

(3) That there must be a recognition of the heightened risk of poverty among groups such as immigrants, single mothers, people with disabilities, aboriginal people and racialized groups;

(4) That families be supported so they can play a meaningful role in promoting opportunity;

(5) That all people in Ontario, including those living in poverty, deserve to be treated with respect and with dignity;

(6) That Ontarians, especially people living in poverty, are to be involved in the reduction of poverty; and

(7) That we need a sustained commitment to work together to develop strong and healthy children living in strong, healthy families in strong, healthy communities.

The Poverty Reduction Act is our commitment to poverty reduction in Ontario for generations to come, beyond the term of a single elected government. Our five-year strategy is a very good start, but it is not enough. We are committed to reducing poverty and expanding opportunity for all Ontarians for future generations, and we need a long-term, ongoing commitment that will extend beyond one government's mandate. That is the objective of the Poverty Reduction Act.

This legislation is about securing hope for generations to come, to commit to law and to state clearly to all Ontarians that poverty reduction is and always will be a priority for the Ontario government. We are a province that has always drawn strength from the fact that we live in a province of boundless opportunity, a province where everyone has the chance to succeed. The proposed Poverty Reduction Act would, if passed, ensure that we stay true to those values, our very best values, and recognize the power and potential of our most valuable resource, the people of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I recognize the member for Lambton—Kent—Middlesex.

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** I too am pleased to speak in support of this bill. If passed, the proposed Poverty Reduction Act would bring about a fundamental shift in the way we approach the fight against poverty in Ontario. It would ensure that as long as poverty continues to exist, it remains top of mind in the public conversation and discourse. It would ensure that all who serve in this House in successive governments are focused on the issue. Perhaps more importantly, and most importantly, it would ensure that people who are working in this fight to reduce poverty in Ontario have their voices heard.



It was those very voices that informed the development of Ontario's first-ever poverty reduction strategy, *Breaking the Cycle*, which we launched this past December. I'm proud to say that it is a historic plan for Ontario, a plan that, for the first time in the history of our province, sets a hard target to reduce child poverty by 25% over the next five years, lifting 90,000 children out of poverty and giving low-income parents the support they need to build better lives for their children.

I know that it's one thing to stand here and to say that increasing opportunity for our most vulnerable, especially children, is the right thing to do; it's quite another to come up with a concrete plan and a long-term commitment to get the job done. Taken together, our *Breaking the Cycle* strategy and this proposed legislation will do just that. That's because our strategy will provide low-income children and their parents with the tools they need to reach their full potential. Our proposed legislation will ensure that we are held to account for the progress we make.

1600

If passed, the Poverty Reduction Act would require successive governments to report annually on key indicators of opportunity. These will typically include income levels, school success, health care and housing. It would require Ontario to develop a new strategy at least once every five years. It would require future governments to set a specific poverty reduction target every five years, and it would mandate governments to consult widely before developing these future strategies, including consultation with those who live in poverty.

This proposed legislation requires that future governments develop poverty reduction strategies with a vision in mind, a vision of a province where every person has the opportunity to achieve his or her full potential in a prosperous and healthy Ontario.

Furthermore, future governments would be guided by seven principles when developing those plans.

First, there is untapped potential in Ontario's population that we need to draw upon by building supports. We need to eliminate barriers to full participation by all Ontarians.

Secondly, strong, healthy communities are an integral part of poverty reduction. The potential of communities must be brought to bear on the reduction of that poverty.

Third, there must be a recognition of the heightened risk of poverty among groups such as immigrants, single mothers, people with disabilities, aboriginal peoples and racialized groups.

Fourth, families are the backbone of healthy communities. Families must be supported so they can play a meaningful role in promoting opportunity.

Fifth, all people in Ontario, including those living in poverty, deserve to be treated with respect and dignity.

Sixth, we need to honour the voices and efforts of all Ontarians, especially people living in poverty, who are engaged in poverty reduction.

Seventh, but not finally, we need a sustained commitment to work together to develop strong, healthy children, families and communities in our province.

In this current economic climate, tackling poverty is both the right thing to do and the smart thing to do. Some would try to argue that now is not the right time to do this. They'll say that the economic situation ties our hands, that it limits our ability to fund new programs, that we really should be focusing on other things. Well, this sort of thinking simply misses the point. The fact is that tackling poverty has everything to do with building a stronger economy.

A recent report from the Ontario Association of Food Banks and TD Bank's Don Drummond drove this point home. It found that the federal and Ontario governments are losing as much as \$13.1 billion a year because of poverty. That puts the real cost of poverty at almost \$3,000 for every household in this province. That's a price that is simply too high for us not to act.

The evidence is clear: There is a moral and an economic imperative to reducing poverty. Tackling poverty in tough economic times makes more sense than ever before. It's about making our people, our workforce and our economy stronger. It's about investing in our communities and our future.

This leads me to the first detailed part of our plan that I want to address today, and that is education. One of the biggest thrusts behind our *Breaking the Cycle* strategy is to continue building a strong, publicly funded education system. The proposed legislation will help ensure that we deliver over the long term by mandating annual reporting on key indicators of opportunity, and there is no better indicator of opportunity than access to education.

Our plan includes a range of new educational projects that build on the signature investments that we have made over the past five years. We're bringing together more supports for at-risk kids in schools, more after-school recreation programs in high-needs neighbourhoods and more help for parents to get involved in their children's education. For example, we are tripling the number of parenting and family literacy centres, to a total of 300 across the province. We're encouraging families to engage in children's learning, familiarizing them with school routines and linking them with resources for special needs, health and other services. We will also launch a community hub program that brings together a range of community partners to better coordinate social and educational support services so that they meet the needs of those who are using them.

Education programs like these are only one piece of the puzzle, though. The second component of our plan that I want to address is income supports. Our plan includes an increase in the Ontario child benefit. It gives low-income families the financial support that they need to provide essentials like food and shelter for their children. Since 2003, the income of a single parent who is working poor will have increased by 54%, or over \$10,000 a year.

The Ontario child benefit is a real breakthrough in the way social assistance is delivered in this province. That's because it reaches low-income children directly, whether their parents are working or are currently on social



assistance. That means that families can continue to receive income support for their children when parents leave social assistance for employment, and it allows families receiving social assistance to keep much more of the income support for their children as their earnings increase. As part of our plan, we are increasing the benefit so that 1.3 million children in low-income families will receive up to \$1,310 a year for essentials like food, shelter and clothing. This will represent a total annual investment of \$1.3 billion at full implementation.

This brings me to the third and final theme I want to address today, and that is targets and measures. One of the decisions we made early on was that setting a hard target was the best way to mobilize resources and focus people on a shared goal. That's why our strategy sets the ambitious target of reducing the number of children living in poverty by 25% over five years, lifting 90,000 children out of poverty, as the minister and I have both indicated. This target truly marks a new era in the fight against poverty in Ontario. Our government will be held accountable for the progress that we are making in the coming years, but setting such a bold and public target will require successive governments to act on poverty for years to come. That is why the proposed legislation, if passed, would mandate the government to set new poverty reduction targets every five years.

We are in the early days here. There is a long road ahead, and we need to be realistic about the fact that global economic hardships will challenge all of us every step of the way, but I believe there is a cause for optimism here. For the first time ever, Ontario has both a concrete plan and a long-term commitment that is needed to break the cycle of poverty.

The proposed Poverty Reduction Act is a bold piece of legislation. It speaks to our best values and to our commitment that Ontario remain the province of strength and opportunity, a province where everyone has the opportunity to achieve their full potential, regardless of where they start in life.

There is no doubt that tackling poverty is going to be a tough job to do. It's going to take all of us, citizens, governments, the business community and the non-profit sector working together, but for the first time, Ontario has a comprehensive strategy to break the cycle of poverty and an opportunity to legislate a plan for generations to come. We've taken the first step towards our strategy. This proposed legislation holds our future governments to account when it comes to poverty reduction. It holds our current government to account. To ensure that Ontario is a province where all people have the opportunity to succeed, we need to move forward on this legislation.

1610

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the speeches of the Minister of Children and Youth Services and the member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex on Bill 152, the Poverty Reduction Act, 2009.

I was called on last week by my local media and asked about this bill. They asked me if I thought it was going to make a difference, and I said quite honestly that I'm skeptical about it. I think it has been quoted in the papers by some other folks commenting on the bill that it's a plan without a plan. I would ask the minister, "Where's the beef?" They made their Breaking the Cycle announcement in December, and it involved \$300 million over five years, except that they seem to be looking for everyone else to make this plan a reality. They are asking for \$1.5 billion from the federal government. So it seems a little strange that the provincial government comes up with what they'd like to do, but they want others to pay for it.

I also said that I sincerely believe that the best answer to poverty in this province or in this country is a strong economy. This government has, through almost every bill they introduced, made it more difficult for businesses to survive in this province, and in fact have made things worse through their actions. Every bill they come out with makes it that much harder for businesses to go about their jobs and provide those good-paying jobs. Just last month, we lost some 70,000 good-paying jobs. Last year, the big part of the budget was the job retraining program, the Second Career program. That has been a complete flop. They talked about 20,000 retraining opportunities; I think we've seen something like 3,000—and as I just pointed out, we lost 70,000 jobs just last month.

So this sounds really nice and fluffy, but do I think it's going to make a significant difference? No, I don't.

And them talking about asking future governments—they're just putting off what they can't do today to other governments that won't be accountable in this Parliament.

So I am very skeptical about this legislation, and I would like to see more details as to how they're actually going to make a concrete difference.

I know that when the Premier was asked about what this bill does, his response was that it elevates interest. Well, that's a lot of meat, isn't it? It's very vague, indeed.

I would be very interested to hear the minister tell me how it's really going to make a difference.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I'd like to say that we welcome any government initiatives in the area of poverty reduction.

I do believe that the minister is sincere in her effort to bring this tragedy forward in our province, but I too will be a bit skeptical of Bill 152 until, I guess, the proof is in the pudding.

They want to reduce it—25 in 5. That's a hefty goal, considering what has happened in our province in the past. The government has made an effort to address this very important issue, obviously not to the extent we'd like to see. Sometimes we have loftier goals in our party.

I feel that we would like to work along with the minister in these initiatives. I also would hope that when we get to second reading and it goes to committee, the members of the committee from the government side are



actually going to listen to us and read our amendments and really take them into consideration. From our perspective, in our party—and also the official opposition—we do have good ideas once in a while, and we would hope that the government would be open-minded and work in a non-partisan manner, because this is all about people who are struggling, and we all represent the people in this province who are struggling. I think if cooler heads prevail, and people can work together to better the situation for the people who are hard hit in this province, then it will be a much better place to live.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I rise today just to offer my support for Bill 152. This legislation will ensure that successive governments, not just our government, are required to have a strategy to work on poverty reduction, which means that as you take these governments together over time, we can ensure that there will be a long-time strategy in Ontario to make sure we are all working together on a strategy to reduce poverty.

This really received a lot of interest and support in Guelph when Minister Matthews was first doing her consultation on poverty reduction. We were very fortunate to have Minister Matthews's parliamentary assistant at the time, my colleague the member for Northumberland—Quinte West, who came to talk to people at a poverty workshop that I hosted. We had a great turnout at that workshop: a lot of people with some very good ideas which we can incorporate into our poverty reduction strategy.

More recently a number of community members, because they were so enthusiastic at that initial workshop, organizations and agencies got together to have a second poverty reduction forum just a few weeks ago. They invited the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to send a representative, and someone attended and talked about our poverty reduction strategy. Again, that was very well received.

One of the things that people are particularly interested in is our child poverty reduction strategy and the Ontario child benefit. They strongly support making sure that children living in poverty receive assistance, and the Ontario child benefit will do just that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** We have time for one last question and comment.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I'll look forward to bringing some more extensive remarks momentarily about Bill 152. As my colleague from Parry Sound—Muskoka said, to paraphrase, I think there's more meat at a vegetarian picnic than there is in Bill 152. I'll talk about it. It's rather thin gruel. There's not much meat between the slices of bread here.

I think all parties obviously support the principle of poverty reduction, but, holy smokes, you have to have some tools in order to do so. As I said when this bill was introduced, it's awfully hard to hit a target when you don't have any arrows in your quiver. In fact, we've seen jobs shrink under the McGuinty government. We've seen

welfare rolls increase. We now have the unfortunate distinction in Ontario of being a have-not province, receiving equalization payments from Ottawa, for the first time in our history accepting what are basically welfare payments from the other provinces; and for the first time in 30 years, Ontario had a higher unemployment rate than the Canadian average. It's shocking.

Ontario has always been the strongest engine of growth, and under the McGuinty government we crossed that line and have stayed there since, above the average unemployment rate of the other provinces. So the most important way—I'll reinforce this in my comments momentarily—to reduce poverty is good, well-paying jobs, and I had hoped that there would be some kind of jobs plan, some kind of an economic strategy and some tools to help elevate people to a better lifestyle for their children and grandchildren than they experience today. Sadly, in this bill there's nothing of that kind.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes the time for questions and comments. One of the government members has two minutes to respond.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Let me first start by saying that I really appreciate the comments of the member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek. I think I heard a tone of conciliation that I have not yet heard from that party on this topic. The notion that they want to work with this government to reduce poverty is music to my ears, I must say.

1620

I want to thank the member from Guelph for talking about what this means in her local community. What we know for sure is that the best solutions to poverty are at the local level. People want to be engaged; they want everyone in their community to have the opportunity. Of course, the provincial government has a very important role, the federal government has a very important role, but the community level is where magic can really happen.

I want to respond, though, to the members from Parry Sound—Muskoka and Niagara West—Glanbrook. I have to tell you that when I heard the member from Niagara West—Glanbrook say, "We all want to reduce poverty"—I tell you, your record speaks for itself. Yours is a party that slashed welfare rates, that froze minimum wage. You vilified people living in poverty. You excluded them from the conversation. You turned your back on the poor of this province. I tell you, I think it's time for you to rethink your position on that.

Where's the beef? I'll tell you where the beef is. The beef is in our strategy that includes increases to minimum wage, which you froze; increases to the Ontario child benefit, which you voted against. It includes a range of programs that support our kids in the schools so they get the education they need to be successful in life. Kids growing up in poverty in this province are not doing as well as we need them to do. We're going to be there for them.

We welcome the support of the party opposite. I hope that, under your leadership, you will come to the table and work with us to reduce poverty in this province.



**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I'm pleased to rise in debate on Bill 152. I understand we have unanimous consent to defer our critic's leadoff speech, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Is there unanimous consent of the House to allow the Conservative Party to defer its leadoff speech? Agreed.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I appreciate all the members for supporting that motion. I know my colleague Julia Munro, the member from York-Simcoe, has worked very hard on this file and cares very deeply about the issue, and we look forward to her more lengthy remarks, which no doubt will be very thoughtful, later on as we debate Bill 152. I know that she has had some good discussions with the minister on this issue and attended a number of her poverty forums that took place in the last year and a half in the set-up to Bill 152. I know my colleagues will enjoy the member for York-Simcoe's remarks as this bill progresses in debate.

I'll try to discuss a couple of these issues. The closest tie to reducing poverty will be the state of the economy. Only when you have healthy, thriving communities with good job prospects, not only at the entry level, but to climb up that ladder, can you truly make a dramatic impact on reducing poverty.

You also need to ensure that communities are safe and secure. If you want businesses, particularly small businesses, to open up in hard-pressed communities and neighbourhoods at risk, you need to provide them with an environment where they know that they can operate safely, to ensure their employees arrive at the workplace in a safe manner and can sell their products, if they're a retail or commercial establishment.

As was illustrated very recently in a series in the *National Post*, the McGuinty government has, unfortunately, the worst record of all the Canadian provinces in obtaining convictions of those who are charged. I do hope that we will see, in further discussion, if they're putting more meat on the bones around Bill 152, what some of their initiatives are going to be around public safety and security.

I'd say the third pillar is that we see support for families. No doubt the values conveyed by families—their ability to make long-term decisions, to provide a stable environment for their children—are an essential element of success to help the next generation escape poverty—some suggestions in that regard as well.

I had hoped a number of those initiatives—improving the economy, supporting families and creating safe and secure neighbourhoods and schools, for example—would be part of Bill 152, but as my colleague Mr. Miller had pointed out, and I noted as well, frankly, there's not much to this three-and-one-fifth-page piece of legislation. As I said somewhat facetiously, there's more meat at a vegetarian picnic than is contained in Bill 152. I know the minister doesn't like to hear that, but it certainly has been the response. I'm not the only one who has said that; it has been a widespread response to this bill that

lacks any real tools to reduce poverty in the province of Ontario.

Certainly there are a lot of motherhood and apple pie statements in the legislation. Subsection 2(2), for example, reads:

“Importance of all Ontarians

“1. That there is untapped potential in Ontario's population that needs to be drawn upon by building and establishing supports for, and eliminating barriers to, full participation by all people in Ontario's economy and society.”

Certainly, nobody would disagree. I think all members would support paragraph 1 of subsection 2(2) of the legislation. But, again, it's a bit of a motherhood and apple pie statement. I think it would be responded to with greater enthusiasm by members of the opposition benches if there were some illustration of how that goal was going to be fulfilled.

“2. That strong, healthy communities are an integral part of the poverty reduction strategy; their potential must be brought to bear on the reduction of poverty.”

No doubt, a vital and safe community where people can move back and forth to the workplace and can proceed to buy something at the store, a place where children can play safely and not be exposed to many of the vices, the crime and the risks that have become a growing problem, not only in our urban centres, but in suburban centres as well—it's almost like an episode of *The Wire*, some of the brazen murders that have taken place in the GTA where it's been fully caught on video. A couple of punks with guns shooting madly, and sadly, some just got off the hook on a recent high-profile murder here in the city. We were treated to a similar unhappy spectacle on last night's news.

I would certainly hope that the minister will be working very closely with the minister for public safety to work on ways—and with municipal law enforcement agencies as well—to target neighbourhoods at risk, to provide that much more secure environment.

We have a major problem with people who witness crimes not coming forward to report them because they don't believe that their safety will be protected if they do so. As a result, there is more and more brazen gunplay in the city of Toronto and other cities in our province that you would think, only years ago, we would hear about in Detroit or the battle of New York City, certainly not in the city that works.

So I hope that as part of this strategy, as this bill moves forward, we'll see some concerted efforts to provide safe and secure streets.

One of the initiatives that has been tried in various American jurisdictions—we actually put it forward in our platform under Premier Eves—is enterprise zones. Enterprise zones would help to compensate new businesses that set up in downtrodden neighbourhoods and communities at risk so they could start hiring people in those neighbourhoods.

Certainly if you come from a poor family, you may not have access to reliable transportation to get to work



on time and on a regular basis. An essential part, as a student particularly, when you're trying to get your first job experience, when you go back for a better-paying job, is to get something on the resumé that you can point to as a measure of success.

So in trying to actually get jobs—whether it's in manufacturing, a commercial operation, what have you—in an at-risk neighbourhood, probably we'll need some ways of compensating them when they set up as new businesses.

Enterprise zones in other jurisdictions have been shown to help address those situations. Once you have healthier businesses and a cluster of them in a neighbourhood, you can certainly help to turn that community around and help those who are within close distance to find better and steady employment.

1630

The bill also says another important point, but it's sadly almost platitudes, the content of this Bill 152:

"Recognition of diversity

"3. That not all groups of people share the same level of risk of poverty. The poverty reduction strategy must recognize the heightened risk among such groups as immigrants, single mothers, people with disabilities, aboriginal peoples and racialized groups."

It is an absolute tragedy when you see, as I know my colleague Mr. Miller from Parry Sound-Muskoka has done, the depravity of many of the reserves across the province of Ontario. Boy, if you're a young person growing up in that environment with such limited opportunities for work, no wonder so many talented individuals find their only livelihood comes from moving away from their families into the cities. I have not, sadly, seen much progress despite this government's promises to the contrary in assisting this.

We have a major challenge as a province to ensure that our replacement rate exceeds our retirement rate. We have a number of people, baby boomers, who until the stock markets plummeted were heading into retirement in the near future. To try to compensate for that, because the birth rate is so low in the province of Ontario, you can rely on a number of areas. Increased immigration is one, but there is certainly a massive pool of untapped potential in the young aboriginal population.

The other group, quite frankly, are people with disabilities, and what I had hoped would be one of the tools that this government would use if it were truly putting its money where its mouth is when it comes to 152 would be a number of initiatives to help the disabled people trying to access a job that they have the talents to do to overcome some of the obstacles they may find in the workplace; for example, tax credits to employers to help make adjustments in their workplace, whether it's a computer or whether it's a physical change in the workplace, to help to compensate for those additional costs. That would be of tremendous benefit to move people from ODSP who want to participate in the workforce, to actually matching their skills with a job. I believe the government's up-front costs for such an initiative would pay for themselves in the long run.

Secondly, I know that in New York state—there are probably others—when government lets contracts for various services, they actually try to set aside a number of contracts for employers who have a high participation of disabled individuals in the workplace. Again, there may be some up-front costs to making adjustments in the workplace, and businesses then are rewarded by having some preferred access to ongoing government contracts. That would be one suggestion on how the government can actually put its money where its mouth is, put some arrows in the quiver, so to speak, to hit the so-called targets that they speak about—actually, there are no targets in Bill 152, but in their companion document that goes along with it.

Item 4 under "Principles":

"Importance of support and involvement of families

"4. That families be supported so that they can play a meaningful role in the reduction of poverty and in promoting opportunity."

Certainly one of the great challenges, if you ask any elementary school teacher in particular how much her job has changed from teaching reading and writing and arithmetic to basic social skills—it's a major cause of concern in our communities because of the breakdown of families in many of these neighbourhoods at risk.

One suggestion that I had brought forward as well that I believe supports families is the notion of joint filing of tax returns. Right now we're a tax system that penalizes any family that chooses to have one spouse who stays at home or works at a part-time job. You pay a higher marginal tax rate as a result. If you had joint filing, they could put in their joint income and have tax savings that would allow for those families who choose to do so to have a parent take a part-time job or work in the home without facing this tax penalty. Right now the tax system penalizes couples that choose to do so. I think the government shouldn't be making value judgments. They should be neutral, whether both spouses are working or not. There may be some impact on the government's bottom line as you move to the notion of joint filing. It does exist in the States, in France, in Germany, I believe, and other comparable jurisdictions. It allows families to make choices in how they distribute their time, and we've seen some movement at the federal level to allow for joint filing or income splitting—another name for it—for pension income and for those with an individual with a disability in the home. Certainly, extending that to a greater portion of the population can help out families. Families at risk, in challenged neighbourhoods, may often find that they have to work quite a bit, and therefore have less time with their children that they would need, exposing them to risks that they otherwise would hope to avoid if an option like joint filing had been made available to them.

This is paragraph 5 of subsection 7(3):

"Regular consultation

"The minister shall regularly consult at such times as the minister considers appropriate with such key stakeholders, other levels of government, members of the



private, public and non-profit sectors and individuals, including those living in poverty, as the minister considers advisable with respect to the long-term poverty reduction strategy.”

That is absolutely, at the end of the day, meaningless. The minister consults when he or she wants with whom-ever they want. There are no time frames that have been set out. What usually occurs in the bill is some form of sanction if the legislation is not followed. This is merely guidance for the road ahead as opposed to any kind of substantive legislation with tools to reduce poverty, support neighbourhoods, fight crime, give greater economic opportunities and ensure that children have a safer environment in which to play and to learn. None of that resonates in Bill 152.

The minister took some exception with my earlier comment and I think gave an inaccurate portrayal of the successes of the previous PC government in bringing jobs to the province Ontario. In fact, the figures you'll see are that some 1.2 million jobs, net new jobs, were created in the province of Ontario, a record that stands to this day. By the way, that was the fastest rate of job creation not only in Canada but in North America as a whole.

This boom in job creation also helped to remove hundreds of thousands of individuals and families from poverty. We saw a reduction in the welfare rolls by I think roughly—my colleagues will correct me if I'm wrong—700,000 individuals. Of course, the minister didn't mention the fact that then-Finance Minister Ernie Eves on several occasions raised the basic personal exemption and took hundreds of thousands of individuals off the tax rolls altogether to encourage folks to work, to get a job so they could keep more of their own money. They faced extremely high marginal tax rates, which is one of the major obstacles to getting people from poverty and moving them up the ladder to the middle class, when the government would be clawing back 50 cents, 60 cents on every dollar. By raising the personal basic exemption, you enable folks to keep more of their own money, to climb the ladder economically and to better their lives, their place and their family's.

Manufacturing jobs often provide a very important pivot from poverty into the middle class. Manufacturing jobs tend to pay better than the service sector. They tend to have pensions. They tend to have a longer-lasting relationship with the employee. The record of Dalton McGuinty, sadly, is that almost 300,000 manufacturing jobs have fled our province. Unbelievably, about 22% of the manufacturing jobs that existed in 2003 are no longer with us in 2009. From 1996 to 2002, contrary to the minister's remarks, Ontario created 241,000 net new manufacturing jobs, and that was spread throughout the province. The greater Toronto area had a 26.6% increase in jobs—over half a million, by the way, in that area; eastern Ontario, 20.3%; central Ontario, 20%; south-western Ontario, 13.5%; and northern Ontario with a 3.7% increase.

I know my time is running out rapidly. My colleagues in the Legislature from Sarnia—Lambton and Parry

Sound—Muskoka both brought to the floor the concerns of the small business sector with respect to minimum wage increases.

1640

The problem is, the government is set to increase minimum wages once again. We are now the highest minimum wage, along with Nunavut. The challenge faced by small businesses, particularly in the hospitality sector, is that they're going to have to lay off more people. Young people coming out of school, people getting their first job and those who are trying to climb up the economic ladder are going to find themselves without an opportunity. Those who keep their jobs may have a slight increase in pay. But in this current economy, sadly, we're going to see many more people—people in poverty, young people, those at risk of falling into poverty—lose their jobs entirely.

My friend Mr. Bailey, just a week or so ago, read into the record a letter from the CFIB, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, expressing their concern about the layoffs that will result from this latest minimum wage increase.

My colleague Mr. Miller today in the Legislature brought up a similar issue. Here's a quote from Mr. Miller. He talked about how small business is “suffocating under the burden of your new rules and regulations in these challenging economic times. It's like death by a thousand cuts. Your government seems to be picking off one sector at a time. Construction businesses” with the “\$11,000 WSIB tax. Lawn care companies” with the “politically motivated, not science-based, ban list”—and small business is very concerned about the rapid increase in minimum wage.

I do hope that the government is truly committed to helping people to escape poverty, to get essential job experiences, to develop that skill set and provide a better life for their families and for themselves; that they will take a good, hard, second look at causing even more unemployment than exists today in this sector.

Their own study by Professor Gunderson from the University of Toronto concluded that a 25% increase in minimum wage would reduce employment by as much as 15%, or approximately 180,000 lost jobs, even if phased in gradually, as proposed by the government.

We have lost far too many jobs already under Dalton McGuinty. The economy is shrinking. The private sector is shedding job opportunities. I think it would put more people into poverty if they continue on the current path. It's chasing jobs out of our province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** My colleague from Niagara West—Glanbram—Glanbrook—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I know. I tried.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Erie—Lincoln was easier.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Toronto—Danforth is easier; no question.



He has spoken to this bill and talked about minimum wage, talked about a variety of approaches, talked about the loss of jobs.

I want to come back to the bill itself. The 25 in 5 coalition needs to be recognized and credited for the work they have done as activists to push this government to come forward with this bill. There is no doubt that they took an issue that had been shunted to the back pages, moved it forward, made it noticeable again, and in fact deserve a lot of credit for putting it on the agenda of this government.

I know the minister personally. I have no doubt, none in my mind, that she cares personally about this issue and will do all that she can as an individual to move this forward.

But I have to say, with all of that, I am concerned about this bill because I know, in part, that the reality of reducing poverty is something that is not going to be addressed until we see what's in the budget. Will there actually be an allocation for increases in social assistance so that people can eat, and eat properly? Will there be increases in funding for affordable housing so that people can have a roof over their head and not have to worry about being out on the street? Will we see action taken not just for children—although I understand why the focus would be on children—but for all who are poor? If you are a child living in a poor family, even if action is taken for you, if your family itself continues to try to exist, to try to survive in a state of deprivation, then there is no doubt in the world, no way in the world that that won't have an impact on you, an impact on your well-being and your outlook on life.

My hope is that this bill will be strengthened in the course of debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** I'm happy to have the opportunity to participate in this very important debate. It's really significant that for the first time ever, Ontario has introduced legislation that, if passed, will commit our future governments to fight against poverty.

The Peel Children's Aid Society recently reported that since 1997, Peel has seen a 51% increase in the number of children living in poverty. This means that more than 70,000 children in Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon live in poverty. This is why I stand today to express my support for Bill 152 and our government's poverty reduction strategy.

In December, our government introduced a plan to reduce the number of children living in poverty by 25% over the next five years. Bill 152 will build on this strategy, and includes guiding principles that will create long-term goals to reduce poverty.

For Ontario to prosper, we have to find ways for everyone in our community to prosper and reach their full potential. Bill 152 will put us on the path to poverty reduction and on the path to a better future for all Ontarians. That is why I support Bill 152 and encourage all members of this House to support this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I'd like to comment on Bill 152, the poverty reduction bill.

I'd like to commend the member from Niagara West—Glanbrook on his erudite remarks, and also all the other members who spoke.

As someone said one time, the best way out of poverty is a job. I think that the economy in this province is on the wrong track. We've witnessed more announcements every day of job reductions, job closures, and layoffs, and the minimum wage is going up at the end of the month. Again, it's admirable that we're going to increase the minimum wage, but at this time, members of the small business community and others have told our party—and I'm sure others have communicated with them as well—that while it's all well and admirable, it's not the right time to do that in this recession. Let's get out of this position that we're in financially in this province, try to improve things, and then at that time we can look at making increases in the minimum wage.

Every day, we're faced with more cutbacks. The strong economy that the member from Niagara West—Glanbrook talked about, that we witnessed in the latter part of the 1990s, when they had tax policies in effect, created new, real net worth jobs. That's what we need to get back to again. I'm not too confident that's going to happen with the green energy bill. They're talking about 50,000 jobs, but they're not going to be full-time jobs. They're going to be there for a year or so while they're doing construction, which is admirable, but then again, they're not the types of jobs that we're losing every day in the manufacturing sector.

I would just caution the members to take a look at this and see if there's some way that we can improve the economy in Ontario and try to get people back to work full-time. Again, the best way out of poverty is a job.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I'd like to commend my colleague from Niagara West—Glanbrook for his comments and his grave concerns about job loss, which we have also shared in the last couple of years.

I've just received information that the Poverty Reduction Act is really going to get tested very quickly. It has come to my attention that—I don't even know how to say this without being rather emotional—Hamilton Steel and Lake Erie Steel, under US Steel Corp., are shutting their operations in Canada. We're talking about thousands and thousands of jobs. We're talking about secondary industries that support steel industries. They say it's a temporary thing. Well, I think the sooner we get this infrastructure money into works, into the place—my community has an 18% poverty rate at this point, right now. With this devastating news, those numbers are going to skyrocket.

1650

I am crushed by this news. My grandfather worked there; my father worked there; my uncles worked there.



A proud history in our family of almost 300 years' service in this plant, and now for the first time in history it's closing down.

Hamilton has been hard hit, Mr. Speaker, as you well know. This is a blow. I hope we can move this money quickly into the steel sector, the construction sector and all the other sectors that are hurting, because for the people in my community, this is devastating news.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes the time for questions and comments. I'll return to the member for Niagara West—Glanbrook, who has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** It certainly brings a very sobering message from my colleague from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek. I know he cares very deeply about this because of the community he represents. He's a proud Stelco guy himself, so I know he'll be personally very devastated by this sad news of Stelco, also known as US Steel, shutting down. As he said quite rightly—I know he's speaking shortly—this will put this act, Bill 152, to the test in the Hamilton, Niagara and Haldimand areas.

I want to add a few more points just to counter the minister's argument, and then I'll look forward to my colleague's remarks.

The number of low-income individuals actually declined under the Mike Harris government from 1.8 million to some 1.6 million—I think about a 19% decline, 257,000 individuals. As I mentioned, 750,000 escaped dependency on welfare. The proof is there, as my colleague from Sarnia said.

The best way to escape poverty is a job, and the government has a duty to create a healthy environment for job creation. You can spend all kinds of money on consultations and bills like Bill 152, but poverty has actually increased under the McGuinty government, welfare rolls are up, and unemployment is the highest it has been in a long time, above the Canadian national average for the first time in 30 years.

I also wanted to note—I mentioned Gunderson's study on the minimum wage—another study by Professor Dave Neumark, University of California, and Dr. William Wascher. US Federal Reserve Board economists reviewed more than 90 studies in 15 countries and found the overwhelming majority of studies consistently show that minimum-wage increases result in decreases in employment, impacting on young people and low-skilled individuals the hardest.

There are better ways, like the working income tax benefit and increasing the basic personal exemption to allow people to collect more of their own money. That's how our approach contrasts to Bill 152.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I want to start off by saying I believe there's a unanimous-consent agreement to stand down the NDP lead and have it take place on a later date.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Toronto—Danforth is seeking unanimous consent of

the House to stand down the leadoff speech by the NDP. Agreed? Agreed.

I'll return to the member for Toronto—Danforth.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Thank you, Speaker, and thank you, colleagues, for allowing that to be stood down.

I must say that indeed it's true: The announcement about the shutdown of the steel works in Hamilton and Nanticoke casts a pall over today's debate. We know very well what that's going to mean to thousands of families; we know what it's going to mean to the economy of Hamilton; we know what it's going to mean to the economy of Ontario. This is very bad news; very bad news indeed.

While it's hard to say that I welcome the opportunity to discuss the Poverty Reduction Act, I must say that it is a privilege to be able to stand here in this House and debate this matter. We in the NDP are pleased that there are initiatives taking place on poverty. We hope that there will in fact be concrete action taken to reduce the unacceptable levels of poverty in Ontario. My colleague from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek is quite correct that this bill will see some very severe tests of its viability, of its effectiveness, in the months—and, unfortunately, probably the years—to come.

It's not clear to me or to my caucus, my party, at this point if this bill is up to the task. We all know that poverty plagues far too many people in Ontario and that more and more Ontarians are being cast into poverty as they lose their jobs. We know that more and more Ontarians are being forced to rely on social assistance. The payments have declined by 25% since 1994, and yet the reality is that the cost of housing, food, warmth, telephone, all the necessities of life in this modern world have continued to rise. We know from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives that the gap between rich and poor in Ontario has reached an all-time high, with the richest 10% earning 75 times more than the poorest 10%. We live in an unprecedentedly rich society which has an unprecedentedly great gap between those at the bottom and those at the top.

We know from the Ontario Association of Food Banks that food bank use has been rising amongst Ontarians. I have to say, as a personal recollection, when I was running in the by-election in my riding in 2006 I was taking a break one afternoon, a few minutes between canvassing, and I was just having a coffee in a Coffee Time, and a woman who was sitting a few tables over came to see me. She said, "Are you the candidate running in this election?" I said yes, I was. And she said, "You have to know that we are hungry."

My guess would be that she was in her mid-30s. She was neatly dressed—not fancily dressed; neatly dressed. I assume she was on OW—Ontario Works—or the Ontario disability support program. But she just said, "We are hungry. Please don't forget that if you're elected." And I haven't forgotten that. It is a reality. It's a reality in my riding and it's a reality in ridings across Ontario.

We know from yesterday's report for the Co-op Housing Federation that more and more Ontarians are at



risk of eviction and homelessness, with 20% of Ontarians spending half their income now on rent. It's a very substantial number. There are people who, every day, are having to grapple with, deal with, the impacts of poverty on their lives and the lives of everyone in their families. They know what it means in an ongoing psychological and physical way to live with the stress of not knowing that you have continuity in your housing, not being certain if you will have food at the end of the month, not being sure if you will have food at the end of the week, and they feel ignored. They feel as if they've been judged, that their fate has been dismissed. For them, this, in this extraordinary society, is a very cruel fate. They know what it's like when they can't provide for their children the way others are provided for. They know what it's like when their kids go to school and they can't dress—not in the best, but just to keep up with the other kids. It's a difficult life.

It doesn't just damage, doesn't just hurt those who are subjected to poverty themselves, although for them the toll is highest; it costs society as a whole. It costs every last one of us: financially, personally, psychologically. Financially, the Ontario Association of Food Banks says that \$13 billion a year is lost in government revenues and lost economic activity because of poverty. That is a fundamental expense. That is a huge expense.

There was a health policy analyst at the University of Toronto, whose name eludes me at the moment, who did an analysis of the impact on poverty on the health care system in Ontario. He concluded in his research that the elimination of poverty would have an impact on the health care system equivalent to finding a cure for cancer, because there are health impacts to poverty: increased rates of heart disease, increased rates of type 2 diabetes, increased rates of all kinds of diseases that are related to stress and poor nutrition. So we do not escape the cost of poverty even if we personally do not suffer from it, do not personally find ourselves victims of it.

1700

Economic insecurity breeds a preoccupation with oneself and one's family. It undermines community solidarity. It's in all of our interests to eliminate poverty, to create strong communities, ones wherein everyone can at least live with dignity.

We need to reduce poverty in this society, and there's hope that in this society today, such action can be taken. If you poll Ontarians, you will find that 80% of them believe this government should reduce poverty by 25% over the next five years. It isn't something that they think is alien, something that is not a worthy goal for this society; they see it as necessary. They see it as something that would make the lives of all of us better.

Recent polls by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives show that, again, 80% of Ontarians believe that a recession makes it even more necessary for us to take action on poverty. Many more people in this recession will be cast out of the middle class and into situations of desperation. Again, this news from Hamilton about the shutting down of Stelco, what we've known as Stelco, US Steel—very, very troubling.

The message from other jurisdictions is that poverty can be reduced through concerted government action. It is not an eternal state. It is not something ordained by destiny. It is something amenable to the actions of humans, of governments, and we are in a position to take that action.

The government of Quebec has succeeded in reducing their poverty rate from 19.3% in 1997 to 11.8% in 2005. That's eight years—a very substantial reduction in poverty in that province, a reduction in misery, a reduction in lost talent and lives.

The government of Ireland succeeded in reducing its long-term rate of poverty from 5.8% in 2003 to 3.7% in 2005. Ireland now faces profound economic problems, but the simple reality is that when the times were good, they actually acted on poverty. Here in Ontario, when times were good, poverty in fact deepened.

The government of the UK managed to lift 800,000 children out of poverty between 1997 and 2005—800,000. Again, when the times were good, they acted. When the times were good in Ontario, more people fell into poverty.

The reality is that governments can have an impact if they're committed. If they're willing to put programs in place, if they're willing to make a difference, they can actually reduce the amount of misery that exists in this society.

All of these governments developed and implemented comprehensive poverty reduction strategies to help achieve these results. They set public targets for poverty reduction. They took action in a number of common areas. They increased social assistance rates. They invested in affordable housing and child care. They increased minimum wages. They invested in public education and employment training. In other words, they understood what we were going to face in the 21st century, the kind of economic issues before us, the need to have a population that was well educated, healthy, able to take on those challenges.

About three to four years ago in this province, community activists noticed that in other Canadian jurisdictions, particularly Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador, there was success in reducing poverty through the development and implementation of poverty reduction plans. So we didn't have to look across the ocean; we could look in our own backyards, to our neighbours, and see that they had taken action, that they had acted as governments who didn't believe that poverty was something untouchable, unmovable, a given, but something that they could act on. Those activists feared that Ontario was falling behind.

In 2007, a very impressive array of labour, faith, social service, health and anti-poverty groups came together to form a coalition to push the Ontario government to commit to develop a poverty reduction strategy. They all deserve our thanks for having taken on this issue. Poverty is rarely a top issue in provincial or federal elections in Canada. That may change, but historically it has not been a top issue. Through its persistence, the 25 in 5 Network



for Poverty Reduction put poverty on the agenda of the 2007 Ontario election. Ten days before the provincial election, they held an energetic and packed rally at Massey Hall—the first time in a long time that participants in an anti-poverty rally had to buy scalped tickets to get in. Poverty activists were successful in getting the McGuinty government to publicly commit to develop and implement a poverty reduction strategy in Ontario. The network has kept up the pressure and, to its credit, the government has delivered on its promise and released a five-year poverty reduction plan.

We believe the plan has serious weaknesses, and we've spoken about these weaknesses in the House. We're concerned that the plan only addresses children. We're concerned that it fails to include key actions, such as improving access to affordable housing and child care, and increasing social assistance rates and the minimum wage. If you're serious about this, those steps have to be taken. A bill is a useful thing, but there are other actions that have to be taken in concert with it to actually make a difference in the numbers.

These actions that I've just noted, actions on affordable housing and child care, were part of successful poverty reduction initiatives in other provinces and a key component in poverty reduction.

We've made it clear, and I made it clear in my remarks earlier, that the plan as it currently stands appears to be seriously underfunded.

We're glad that the plan has been introduced. We think that it affords an opportunity to take a step in the right direction, an opportunity for the members of this Legislature to debate and prod and push to try to get changes to this bill and actions taken in the budgeting process to really make a difference.

The 25 in 5 Network has advocated strongly for anti-poverty legislation to compel future governments to also set public targets for poverty reduction and develop and evaluate long-term poverty plans in consultation with citizens. Now the government has responded to this demand and has tabled Bill 152. The bill requires government to take action on poverty, collect information, consult, and be accountable to the public. We welcome that.

We agree that having the legislation introduced keeps poverty on the provincial agenda, but we need to ensure that this bill is more than simply a symbolic gesture. It's critical that it be more than a symbolic gesture. People living in poverty in this province, and all Ontarians, deserve more than symbolism. To be worthwhile, it must actually lead to differences in poor people's lives in Windsor, Kingston, North Bay, Toronto. To that end, we will be constructively critical of this bill because, as I said before, it has some significant weaknesses.

There are some good elements to the bill. It includes some important principles: the recognition of at-risk groups and the importance of dignity and respect for low-income people. It includes the need to monitor indicators that measure the causes of poverty, not just its effects. It requires government to regularly report on and review

their plans in consultation with Ontarians, including low-income Ontarians.

However, when you compare this bill to the government of Quebec's 2002 act to reduce poverty and social exclusion, a number of limitations and weaknesses of the bill become apparent. The Quebec legislation is more substantial, both in terms of length and areas that it touches on. Their bill is backed by investment. The Quebec government has invested about six times as much money in their strategy on a per capita basis than the government of Ontario is proposing to invest in its strategy.

Their bill is stronger in three ways.

First, the bill sets no ongoing specific and strong targets for poverty reduction. It does require the current government to pursue its current 25 in 5 target, but it sets no minimal baselines for future poverty reduction targets. In other words, future governments can choose to set poverty reduction targets as low as they would like. Twenty-five in five might very well become 5 in 25 in the future. This bill wouldn't prevent that.

1710

Additionally, written into the preamble to this act is the following escape clause: "The implementation and success of the strategy will require the sustained commitment of all levels of government, all sectors of Ontario society and a growing economy." Well, I have to say that when you look around today, those preconditions don't seem to be there in great supply. The Premier has regularly stated that without economic growth and billions of dollars in federal money, the province can't meet its 25% poverty reduction target. This provides what is also written in the government poverty reduction plan that was released in December. The bill reiterates these conditions but goes further by saying that the success and even the implementation of the government's poverty reduction strategy require the sustained commitment not just of the federal government but all levels of government. Not only that; success and implementation require the sustained commitment of all sectors of Ontario society. I don't think it's a bad idea to reach out and bring in the rest of society to deal with a broad social problem. But in terms of legislation that will govern the direction of this particular administration, what is the use of enshrining a requirement to set targets for poverty reduction if that requirement is contingent on so many vague conditions? Right now, our economy is not growing. As I understand it, that would mean that these targets would be set aside. As I understand it, the federal government has not been exactly deeply committed to poverty reduction. That will present tremendous challenges to actually delivering on this act.

In contrast, the Quebec poverty reduction law sets strong and precise targets for their poverty reduction strategy: namely, to "progressively make Quebec, by 2013, one of the industrialized nations to have the least number of persons living in poverty." That's the kind of goal we need in Bill 152, not unspecified targets with escape clauses; a far more concrete target that people can use to hold government to account—not just this government



but any future government—to see that they actually make a difference in people's lives, actually make a difference in this society.

The second problem is the lack of comprehensiveness of Bill 152. There's no requirement in the bill that the poverty reduction strategies that are developed be comprehensive. From the start, the Premier and the minister have repeatedly promised "a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy" for Ontario. However, as I've already mentioned, the government's current strategy focuses only on children, a worthy enough goal but not broad enough for this society. It ignores other groups at risk of poverty. Seniors, youth, people with disabilities, women, unattached adults, people of colour, aboriginal people and new immigrants are all left out of the calculation, all of whom deserve to live with dignity and respect, to have an opportunity to live fully in this society. The McGuinty government poverty reduction strategy also fails to take comprehensive action on the full range of areas related to poverty, fails to improve access to affordable housing and child care, fails to improve the adequacy of social assistance rates. It lacks the requirement that current or future poverty reduction strategies be comprehensive. It leaves open the possibility that future poverty reduction strategies will be far narrower. Again, Quebec's law does much better: It requires a comprehensive range of action to be taken to reduce poverty.

I can see that I'm running short of time. My colleague from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek will take up this argument, but I have to say that we need strong poverty reduction legislation. The government has introduced a bill that can be reshaped. In the course of this debate I hope that in fact the minister and the Premier will take into account what we've said and make this a bill that Ontario can be proud of.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** First of all, I want to thank the member from Toronto-Danforth for his comments. I think his review of what's going on in other jurisdictions is very important to us.

He talks about the fact that our strategy, at this time, addresses children and is concerned that it addresses only children, but I think that there's an urgency about the need to address poverty for children. When we talk about what potential we have in our children—you mentioned that in other jurisdictions they use things such as minimum wage, education and that sort of thing—our children have their whole lives ahead of them yet, and if we are going to ever move them forward, we need to start with them first.

We talk about, and you mentioned many times, 25 in 5. We look at that and we say we want to achieve a 25% reduction in poverty in five years. That is our plan, but the reality is that that still leaves 75%. We have a lot of work ahead of us. That's what this bill is intended to address. It is intended to say that we are not going to be satisfied with just achieving 25 in 5. We need to make sure that in the future, all governments work on the 75%,

that we move that forward. We need to make sure that those strategies are such that we don't just entrench a particular strategy into legislation. We need to make sure that, over time, we deal with this.

But I think the old colloquialism about eating an elephant one bite at a time holds true here. If we look at 100% of the poverty, it would be a frightening experience for anyone to think how they're going to tackle that. We, as a government, have said we are going to tackle that through the children first. I think that is a plan that will see some success for us.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Thank you to the member from Toronto-Danforth for his speech on Bill 152, An Act respecting a long-term strategy to reduce poverty in Ontario.

In his talk, he hoped that this bill is not just about symbolism. I would say that I'm afraid—being a bit of a sceptic, I think it is about symbolism. I'm holding the bill in my hand, and it's all of three pages long. I question whether it's really going to make a difference in this province.

Of course, we all want to see poverty reduced in this province, but as even the government has stated when they were introducing this bill—they have said, very clearly, that this plan can only have success if the economy grows. As the member from Toronto-Danforth pointed out, the economy is not growing in Ontario at this time. In fact, the member from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek just announced that US Steel was shutting down operations in Ontario, which would affect some 2,100 good-paying jobs. I just got an e-mail from a forestry company in my riding that's shutting down some of their operations, and every day I seem to get another announcement. That's why I say—and our party, I believe, says—that the best thing you can do to fight poverty is to provide good-paying jobs. We need to look at what we need to do as province to get our competitive edge back that we've lost under this government so that we attract those good jobs here in this province.

We have the highest marginal tax rate in North America. We have the highest corporate tax rate. Businesses can locate wherever they want, so if we have a higher tax rate in Ontario than every other province and every other state, and if a business is looking at locating, they're probably not going to locate in Ontario. So we need to look at those things, as well as many other aspects, to fight poverty in this province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I was, as always, impressed with my colleague from Toronto-Danforth and his deep understanding of poverty and the reality of it.

I just heard the Conservative member, again, giving us the old bromides about tax cuts and competitive tax rates. That's our problem: We still have too many people thinking backwards, looking in the rear-view mirror. They tried the competitive tax rates in Iceland; it's bankrupt.



Then Ireland tried the competitive lower tax rates; it's bankrupt. Estonia just tried it; it's bankrupt. These business magazines were always saying, "Canada should be more like Estonia, more like Ireland, more like Iceland." Obviously, it's much more than competitive tax rates, and it's going to be challenging.

1720

We are fortunate that the minister is very sincere, very capable and very dedicated to doing something about it. She recognizes that it's not going to be easy.

I know the Tories like to talk about another hunk of bad news: "We told you so." Well, that's not going to solve anything. We want solutions. We want to work with everybody who's willing to work to solve some of these problems, because you can talk about being competitive, but our competitors are in the same boat that we are. England, the US, Germany—they're all looking for answers; as we are. So by throwing stones at ourselves, we solve nothing, but we've got to commit ourselves, despite these most difficult times, to try and take care of people who cannot take care of themselves. I think that's what the minister is saying: It's not going to be a very easy thing to do by any stretch of the imagination, but it is worth the effort.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments? Seeing none, I'll return to the member for Toronto—Danforth, who has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** My thanks to the members from Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, Parry Sound—Muskoka and Eglinton—Lawrence for their commentary. I want to deal with a few of the points that they raised.

I have no doubt that it's critical to take action on childhood poverty. I'm not arguing that it should be set aside; I'm just saying that if you're actually going to deal with poverty, children in poor families have to have their whole family structure dealt with. I can't say anything other than that. If you are in a family where the stress is constant around housing, around food, around the future, then it will impact you. It is important that children get support in schools and the base so that they can establish their lives, but that base is also rooted very profoundly in their family. So when you talk about poverty, you have to talk about the larger society and the larger community.

Those who have contributed over the decades to building this province and to building this country, those who are seniors, should not be left in poverty because their whole life is not ahead of them. They should not be left in poverty, because they have done so much for us. That has to be recognized. I don't disagree that children have to have action taken to get them out of poverty; I argue that it has to be broader than that, because the needs are so broad—morally, socially and economically.

I am concerned about the potential for this bill to be simple symbolism. I want to see real allocation of funds, real change in other pieces of legislation around the minimum wage and around unionization so that people can live better lives. It isn't just a question of government money; it's a question of people being able to bargain better in the workplace and the marketplace.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to speak on Bill 152, An Act respecting a long-term strategy to reduce poverty in Ontario, or the Poverty Reduction Act, 2009. I must confess that I've really, thus far, found this debate on Bill 152 to be truly engaging, and I want to commend all the members who have spoken thus far on this very, very important topic for really bringing out their motivation behind being in public office.

I think it would be true to say that we all entered politics, not only in this particular body, but at the federal level, the municipal level and in other provinces, in order to help others, in order to help those who are not able to help themselves and in order to find ways and solutions to resolve the bigger problems in our communities—the community at large, such as, in our case, the province of Ontario, but also our individual communities—for me, the city of Ottawa and my particular riding of Ottawa Centre. It is our way of giving back to our community for everything they have given to us.

That's why, in a debate on an important issue such as poverty reduction, it is extremely important to ensure that we have collected everybody's views, that we have ensured that we have listened to everyone, to ensure that the chart we are putting forward is one which leaves no one behind.

Of course, there are going to be many differences between our opinions, and that should be always the case. Because of how societies are, especially democratic societies, we will not always agree 100% as to what is the right course of action. But the debate, such as the one that is taking place here today, allows for perfecting options that are available, the courses of action that are available to all of us.

I am heartened that we are having this debate on a very important issue, an issue that goes to the core of our responsibility as legislators, as policy-makers, as law-makers, to ensure that we help everyone in our community, in our society. I've often spoken in this Legislature about our collective responsibility as individuals to help our communities, to help the broader society as a whole, and I think we are doing that here.

Reducing poverty is, of course, not an impossible task, but it's a task that will require a lot of coordinated action, a lot of working together. In an ideal world, and I'm sure every single member in this House will agree with me, our aim should be to eliminate poverty. There should be no poverty, especially in the kind of society we live in. It's unfortunate that people live in poverty. That's the ideal thing I think we all aim and aspire toward. But we have to be practical and we have to be cognizant of the realities that are around us. What is happening today in our economy in Ontario, in Canada, and globally is indicative of that practicality, which is extremely important. That's why it's important that we work together, that we be in sync to reduce poverty and we come up with a plan which is coordinated.



One level of government alone will not be able to reduce or eliminate poverty. I think our communities understand that. We need everybody at their best, to ensure that we eliminate or we reduce poverty. We need to make sure that all levels of government are involved in the quest to reduce poverty. The federal level, the provincial government, and the municipalities—all three levels of government—need to be engaged in order to reduce poverty.

Not only governments, but various sectors within our society have to be coordinated in order to achieve this task: the public sector—that is, the government; the private sector, our corporate partners; and, of course, the voluntary sector, those members of our communities who are out there spending their time, their resources through various social service agencies, helping out the communities. All three sectors have to work together. They have to be coordinated. I think we have to be very mindful of that, and we as a body can be the agent to make sure that coordinated action takes place. That's why it's essential that we not only work together in this particular Legislature, in this room, but also outside of this Legislature and in our communities.

As many of you know, I was elected in October 2007. One of the campaign pledges I ran on in my community, which was part of my political party's platform, was to come up with a poverty reduction strategy. I have to tell you, as somebody running for the very first time for public office, I was and am still very, very excited about that prospect, that we are going to work together to ensure that we reduce poverty. What better motivation to seek public office than a commitment to reduce poverty?

When the government initiated the whole consultative process, I was involved, on behalf of my community, with Minister Deb Matthews and her office, on this particular issue from the forefront, because I think it's extremely important that we listen to our communities when we are trying to understand: What is poverty? How does it really impact people? What actions do we need to take to reduce and eventually eliminate poverty? How can we all work together to reduce and eventually eliminate poverty? In that regard, I had the honour to hold three meetings, three public consultations, dealing with poverty reduction. I want to thank all the members of my community who have come out in very large numbers, rich and poor, from various different sectors—from the corporate sector, the private sector, the volunteer sector, social service agencies—to talk and share their ideas as to how we as a province and other levels of government can reduce poverty.

1730

The very first consultation I hosted was on May 9, 2008, at the Bronson Centre, and I was very happy that the minister responsible, Deb Matthews, attended that particular consultation, which was very well attended. I held the second one just as an MPP on June 26, 2008, again with very broad participation from the community. One of the things we wanted to do, and we did, was to develop a report from my community of Ottawa Centre

as to the different steps we as a community, we as a government, can take to reduce poverty. In fact, we actually submitted that report to the minister. Most recently, on February 3, after the strategy was released, I invited Minister Deb Matthews again, and she came to the community to have another town hall meeting where we could discuss with the members of our community the scope and breadth of the strategy and how we're going to implement it.

I've been talking to my community, saying, "We've all got to work together." I'm fortunate to belong to a community where they've taken that on and said, "Yes, absolutely. We all need to work together to ensure that we reduce poverty in our communities."

Ottawa, as you know, is the capital of Canada. It's the second-largest city in Ontario. It's fairly prosperous because we have quite a stable employer, the federal government of Canada. The average income in Ottawa in 2005 was about \$72,600, which is higher than the national average of \$65,500. But that does not mean that there is no poverty in Ottawa. Unfortunately, there is. I want to share some statistics with you, and this comes from Ottawa's Vital Signs report 2008, done by the Community Foundation of Ottawa:

"Female-headed lone-parent families continued to experience a higher poverty rate, at 31.3%, than other family types, despite a slight improvement of 2.7% between 2000 and 2005." So essentially, the poverty rate has gone down in families which are headed by a female lone parent. "In contrast, the poverty rate in Ottawa among male-headed lone-parent families in Ottawa in 2005 was 17%, while the rate among two-parent families was 7.4%."

"In 2006, the child poverty rate in Ottawa, based on the low income measure (LIM), an indicator of relative poverty, was 20.3%, which was down from 23.7% in 2000. Ottawa's rate in 2006 was lower than both the provincial rate of 23.4% and Canadian rate of 23.1%."

Though the trend is in the right direction in Ottawa, since 2000, the measures the government has taken have resulted in a decrease in rates of poverty in Ottawa, both in terms of households which are led by single, lone-parent females and also in terms of child poverty. That's a good sign. The bad sign, the bad news, is that there's still poverty. About 20% of kids in Ottawa still suffer in poverty, and we need to take action to resolve that.

Let me talk about how this strategy and this act will help in that. First of all, for me what's really important is that the Poverty Reduction Act, 2009, for the very first time in Ontario puts in place a long-term strategy to reduce poverty, keeping in mind that this is a long-term goal. We would like this to happen immediately, but unfortunately that's not practical or realistic. The way I see it, this is almost a constitution on how we are going to reduce poverty. It puts in those basic fundamental principles needed for any government—not just this government; any future government—as to how poverty is going to be reduced. That is a very positive sign, a real sign in the right direction because, again, no matter who is in power, the responsibility remains that we need to



make sure that members of our communities are not living in poverty.

The other important thing is that the Breaking the Cycle strategy puts in place a target to reduce child poverty by 25% in five years. That strategy and that target are very well-referenced in Bill 152. That is the stated aim and purpose of this government.

In addition to that, the legislation requires that the minister report to this House on an annual basis as to the progress that has been made to meet that target. That is a very important point in terms of accountability, that we have an opportunity on an annual basis to see where we are: Are we doing the right thing in order to reduce poverty?

Lastly, keeping in mind the aim to have a long-term strategy, there is a requirement that the government undertake an update of the strategy every five years. Realities change. Problems change. We need to ensure that we are coming up with more up-to-date solutions to reduce poverty. In this particular strategy, for the first five years, the focus is on children and families, a very important focus.

We need to ensure that we break the cycle of poverty, to ensure that poverty doesn't become intergenerational. The last thing you want to inherit from your parents is how to be poor. We need to create a community, to create a society where, just because you were born in a poor family, that does not mean that you are going to be a poor adult as well. I am very happy and pleased to see that that is a key focus of the poverty reduction strategy.

There are many studies done which demonstrate that the chances are fairly high that if you're born in a poor family, as an adult you will be poor as well. I want to quote from a study by Professor Miles Corak, who happens to be my constituent, an economist by profession and a professor at the University of Ottawa. In March 2006, he did a study called *Do Poor Children Become Poor Adults? Lessons from a Cross Country Comparison of Generational Earnings Mobility*. In the study, he states:

"In the United States almost one half of children born to low-income parents become low-income adults. This is an extreme case, but the fraction is also high in the United Kingdom at four in 10, and Canada, where about one third of low-income children do not escape low income in adulthood. In the Nordic countries, where overall child poverty rates are noticeably lower, it is also the case that a disproportionate fraction of low-income children become low-income adults. Generational cycles of low income may be common in the rich countries, but so are cycles of high income. Rich children tend to become rich adults. Four in 10 children born to high-income parents will grow up to be high-income adults in the United States and the United Kingdom, and as many as one third will do so in Canada."

1740

In conclusion, Professor Corak talks about some of the policy options available to address child poverty. He states:

"It is increasingly claimed that child poverty in economies of plenty should be no more tolerated than poverty among the elderly, the elimination of which has been one of the important accomplishments of the more progressive welfare states. This claim is often buttressed by the fact that children differ from other groups because current circumstances are important not just for their well-being in the present but also decades into the future. However, the capacity of children to become self-sufficient and successful adults is compromised not only by monetary poverty, but by poverty of experience, influence, and expectation. This argument calls for broader thinking on the mechanisms and causes of generational mobility, and may draw public policy into areas of social and labour market policies that touch on the functioning of families. Money is of consequence, but it is not enough"—the idea being that we know, both from social studies and economic studies, that a child born in poverty will carry that forward.

What we need to do, as a first step to reduce and hopefully eliminate poverty, is to break that link, to ensure that those kids who are born in poverty in Canada, in Ontario, don't take this with them and then pass it on to their children. That's why I'm very happy that the focus of this particular strategy is children and their families.

But that does not say that we should not focus on anybody else. I mentioned earlier that I've held three round-table consultations on this particular issue, and some of the issues that often come up are: What about the disabled within our community? What about single people who are poor? Should we leave them behind? Of course not. We need to ensure that we find ways that those who have disability challenges, those who may be single and don't have families, are also not left behind.

That is why it is extremely important that we in this chamber work together to come up with positive solutions. I'm very optimistic, and I'm looking forward to the discussion that will take place not only at this level, in this debate, but also in committee, to fine-tune Bill 152, where we'll make sure that we find solutions for everybody and that we don't leave anybody behind.

We have to make sure that we are realistic, that we come up with real, tangible ideas which are achievable, which we can measure, so that we can say, "You know what? In these first five years, we've accomplished A, B and C. Here's our challenge for the next five years," so that we are not just grandstanding but actually accomplishing results. That is my objective, and I look forward to working with every member of this House to accomplish that and reducing poverty in Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm pleased to have an opportunity to add some comments on the speech from the member from Ottawa Centre on Bill 152, An Act respecting a long-term strategy to reduce poverty in Ontario.

I happen to believe that one of the keys to reducing poverty in our country and our province is education—



and one of the weak links is the community college system. I think the community colleges are very successful, but in terms of their funding, they actually receive less funding per pupil than just about any level of education. In fact, I recently met with Barbara Taylor from Canadore College, and they're looking at expanding into Parry Sound with a new campus. It's something that I think, and would hope, the government would support, because that is the sort of campus that can provide the skills to provide an opportunity for people to upgrade their skills so they can get those well-paying jobs, and also the people that industry needs to be able to be competitive. So I think, as one of the planks in terms of fighting poverty in this province, more support for the community colleges would be a good investment.

I also received a letter from Brian Tamblyn, the president of Georgian College. He was making a case for how community colleges are in a tough spot right now and need more funding. I think that would be money well spent. Georgian College has a newly opened campus in the town of Bracebridge that's filling many of the needs of the local community.

So I hope that the government will support those community colleges. They are vital to providing the skills that people need to be able to get the well-paying jobs and get out of poverty.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments? The member for Hamilton East-Stoney Creek.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I'd like to compliment my colleague from Ottawa Centre. He seems to be getting very proficient at standing up without notes in this House, and I hope his colleagues can follow suit. He's doing a great job in that area.

I must say, in reference to the Poverty Reduction Act, that our party obviously will be supporting it to the next reading. But after today's news of US Steel closing all Canadian operations in Hamilton and Lake Erie, coupled with all the other closures that have been going on, I think that unfortunately Bill 152 is going to fall short, with the number of people who are going to require assistance in our province.

I can't emphasize enough to this government that they should move ahead quickly with their infrastructure money and maybe a little Canadian protectionism. It sounds like poverty will be created through American protectionism of the steel industry, forestry and mining, because they will close their foreign operations, which to them is Canada, and they're doing that at 3 o'clock today—a devastating announcement for my community and for all of Ontario.

I'm telling this House, the government and everyone else that if we don't get our act together as far as getting this economy rolling, we are on the borderline of a depression. The Steel Company of Canada operated during the Great Depression. My father worked two days one week, three the next. He shared his workload with his mate so the families could keep working and wouldn't starve.

This is absolutely devastating. I don't know if Bill 152 is up to this task. Hopefully, the government is going to push forward quickly with money for our communities, because this poverty reduction plan is going to be overwhelmed extremely quickly.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** I listened with great interest to the member from Ottawa Centre and I was struck with just how comprehensive is his understanding of poverty and how capably he articulated not just his vision but his values.

It's been said that budgets—and I believe this—are more than just economic documents; they're moral statements. I think the government on this side has done much—nowhere near enough yet, but much—to reflect the values which we on a good day would hold to be self-evident, and that's that everybody ought to have opportunity. In fact, opportunity doesn't truly exist if anyone is denied the opportunity to in fact have an opportunity.

It's written in the Good Book somewhere that the poor are always with you, and I think that's probably true. But maybe the question is: What are we doing to always be with the poor? What are we doing to stand in solidarity with those who don't have the kind of opportunity that we'd wish for our own kids?

I remember that Bobby Kennedy—I worked on his campaign in the States in 1968—used to say, "We ought to reach out to people who are vulnerable because we love them." But if we can't get to the point where we can say we love somebody, we ought to do it simply because it makes good economic sense to make sure that everyone's at that level field.

It begins with putting building blocks in place. Those building blocks include early childhood education, education generally, nutrition, and economic opportunities. I think the member opposite spoke to those things well.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments? Seeing none, I'll return to the member for Ottawa Centre, who has two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I want to extend my thanks to the members from Parry Sound-Muskoka, Hamilton East-Stoney Creek and Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Westdale for their responses to my comments.

We live in the era of hope today, where we are open to new ideas. We are open to dream and make those dreams a reality. These are definitely very challenging economic times, challenging in Ontario, in Canada and globally. Of course, we would have to all work very closely together to ensure that we come out of these times stronger, united and more future-oriented than we went into them.

This poverty reduction strategy is just one element. I concur with my colleague from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek that we need to do more to ensure that we help all our brothers and sisters and members of communities who are suffering through this economic crisis. I am also very optimistic that we, as a collective body, are capable of helping. We are capable of coming up with those right ideas and making them happen, just like, through this



poverty reduction strategy, we are capable of reducing child poverty by 25% in five years. I really urge all of us to work together to come up with our best ideas, the brightest ideas, and make that reality happen.

I just want to take this opportunity to thank Minister Deb Matthews for her commitment to this very important task. I know she's worked very, very hard, and through

her, I want to thank her policy adviser Tatum Wilson for his dedication on this very important issue.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** It being close to 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1752.*

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## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Ms. Helena Jaczek.....5190

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

### Ontario Federation of Agriculture

Mr. Ernie Hardeman.....5190

### Emily Tieu

Mr. Norman W. Sterling .....5190

### Avro Arrow

Mr. Monte Kwinter .....5191

### Pesticides

Mr. Toby Barrett .....5191

### Child care

Mr. Paul Miller.....5191

### By-election in Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock

Mr. Jeff Leal.....5192

### Congenital heart disease

Ms. Helena Jaczek.....5192

### Freedom of inquiry and expression

Mr. David Zimmer .....5192

### Nurse practitioners

Mr. David Oraziatti .....5192

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES

### Animal protection

Hon. Rick Bartolucci.....5193

### Animal protection

Mr. Toby Barrett .....5193

### Animal protection

Mr. Peter Kormos.....5194

## PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

### Protection of minors

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk .....5195

### Sales tax

Mr. Pat Hoy.....5195

### Protection of minors

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk.....5195

### Hospital funding

Mr. Bob Delaney .....5196

### Diabetes treatment

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk.....5196

### Child custody

Mr. Jim Brownell .....5196

### Diabetes treatment

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk.....5196

### Bathurst Heights Adult Learning Centre

Mr. Mike Colle.....5197

### Sales tax

Mr. Toby Barrett .....5197

### Interprovincial bridge

Mr. Yasir Naqvi .....5197

### Lupus

Mr. Bob Delaney .....5197

## ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

### Poverty Reduction Act, 2009, Bill 152, Ms. Matthews / Loi de 2009 sur la réduction de la pauvreté, projet de loi 152, Mme Matthews

Hon. Deborah Matthews .....5198

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel .....5199

Mr. Norm Miller.....5201

Mr. Paul Miller.....5201

Mrs. Liz Sandals.....5202

Mr. Tim Hudak.....5202

Hon. Deborah Matthews .....5202

Mr. Tim Hudak.....5203

Mr. Peter Tabuns .....5205

Mrs. Amrit Mangat.....5206

Mr. Robert Bailey.....5206

Mr. Paul Miller.....5206

Mr. Tim Hudak.....5207

Mr. Peter Tabuns .....5207

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel .....5210

Mr. Norm Miller.....5210

Mr. Mike Colle.....5210

Mr. Peter Tabuns .....5211

Mr. Yasir Naqvi .....5211

Mr. Norm Miller.....5213

Mr. Paul Miller.....5214

Hon. Ted McMeekin .....5214

Mr. Yasir Naqvi .....5214

Second reading debate deemed adjourned .....5215

# CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Tuesday 3 March 2009 / Mardi 3 mars 2009

## ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

### Green Energy and Green Economy Act, 2009, Bill 150, Mr. Smitherman / Loi de 2009 sur l'énergie verte et l'économie verte, projet de loi 150, M. Smitherman

Mr. Peter Kormos.....	5169
Ms. Laurel C. Broten.....	5170
Mr. Toby Barrett.....	5170
M. Gilles Bisson.....	5171
Mr. Mike Colle.....	5171
Mr. John O'Toole.....	5171
Mr. Gilles Bisson.....	5173
Mr. David Oraziotti.....	5173
Mr. Norm Miller.....	5173
Mr. Mike Colle.....	5174
Mr. John O'Toole.....	5174
Mr. Gilles Bisson.....	5174
Mr. Phil McNeely.....	5176
Mr. John O'Toole.....	5177
Ms. Laurel C. Broten.....	5177
Mr. Norm Miller.....	5177
Mr. Gilles Bisson.....	5177
Mr. Bill Mauro.....	5178
Second reading debate deemed adjourned.....	5180

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman.....	5180
Mr. Joe Dickson.....	5180
Hon. Leona Dombrowsky.....	5180
Hon. Margaret R. Best.....	5180

### Decorum in chamber

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters).....	5180
--------------------------------------	------

## ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

### Ontario economy

Mr. Tim Hudak.....	5180
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	5180

### Ontario economy

Mr. Tim Hudak.....	5181
Hon. Dwight Duncan.....	5181

### Manufacturing jobs

Mr. Howard Hampton.....	5182
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	5182

### Poverty

Mr. Michael Prue.....	5183
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	5183

### Ontario economy

Mr. Ted Arnott.....	5184
Hon. Dwight Duncan.....	5184

### Diagnostic services

Mme France Gélinas.....	5184
Hon. David Caplan.....	5184

### Assistance to farmers

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel.....	5185
Hon. Leona Dombrowsky.....	5185

### Renewable energy and energy conservation

Mr. John Yakabuski.....	5186
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	5186

### Don jail

Mr. Peter Kormos.....	5186
Hon. Rick Bartolucci.....	5186

### Medical research

Mr. Mike Colle.....	5187
Hon. John Wilkinson.....	5187

### Small business

Mr. Norm Miller.....	5187
Hon. Harinder S. Takhar.....	5187

### Hospital services

Mr. Peter Kormos.....	5188
Hon. David Caplan.....	5188

### Police officers

Mr. Pat Hoy.....	5188
Hon. Rick Bartolucci.....	5189

### Renewable energy and energy conservation

Mr. John Yakabuski.....	5189
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	5189

### Public transit

Mr. Paul Miller.....	5190
Hon. James J. Bradley.....	5190

Continued on inside back cover



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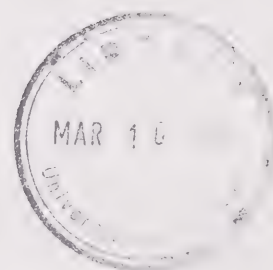
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**Wednesday 4 March 2009**

**Mercredi 4 mars 2009**



**Speaker**  
Honourable Steve Peters

**Président**  
L'honorable Steve Peters

**Clerk**  
Deborah Deller

**Greffière**  
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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 4 March 2009

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 4 mars 2009

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by a Sikh prayer.

*Prayers.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS AMENDMENT ACT (ORGAN DONOR LEAVE), 2009 LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES NORMES D'EMPLOI (CONGÉ POUR DON D'ORGANE)

Mr. Fonseca moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 154, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 in respect of organ donor leave / Projet de loi 154, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi en ce qui concerne le congé pour don d'organe.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Debate?

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing the time with my parliamentary assistant, the member from Brampton West.

Today we begin second reading of Bill 154, the Employment Standards Amendment Act (Organ Donor Leave), 2009. I would like to begin my comments by reiterating what is in this bill and why we are acting.

Our government has already taken some steps toward making the province a national leader in enhancing and saving lives through organ donation for transplantation. These steps are contained in our announcement made in 2007, setting out \$4 million to implement an organ donor strategy. This strategy includes the establishment of the program for reimbursing expenses of living organ donors. This is a fund that will reimburse living organ donors for reasonable, out-of-pocket types of expenses and lost income associated with their organ donation. The purpose of the fund is to remove potential financial barriers to living organ donations.

Reimbursing organ donors and removing financial barriers was one of the recommendations made by the citizens' panel established by the Ministry of Health in 2006. The panel also recommended job-protected leave for donors.

Yesterday, we responded by introducing Bill 154. With this bill, we are taking another step that supports our commitment to encourage organ donations in Ontario. If passed, this bill may help increase life-saving transplants and reduce wait times for patients on the organ transplant waiting list. It would also assist in reducing health care costs. But there's another benefit, a benefit on which we can't place a cost. By providing unpaid, job-protected leave for organ donors, we may be helping increase the number who donate an organ. This will help save lives.

Providing an organ donation which would save the life of a husband, wife, son, daughter or other relative is a precious gift. Organ donors are caring and compassionate people. Job-protected leave for living organ donors would provide support for those compassionate Ontarians who are giving the gift of life to others.

Why are we introducing job-protected leave for organ donors at this time? Living organ donors play an important role in organ donation. They make up approximately 30% of total transplants. The job-protected leave we are proposing in Bill 154 may help increase the number of organ donors by providing support to those donors.

We have not come to this decision without due consultation and reflection. As I mentioned earlier, in November 2006, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care commissioned a Citizens Panel on Increasing Organ Donations. The purpose of this panel was to survey the public on their views about organ donation and to find ways to improve and increase organ donations in Ontario. The panel released its recommendations in March 2007. Their recommendations focused on such things as improving awareness of the importance of organ donations and removing barriers to donations. One of those recommendations fell under the mandate of the Ministry of Labour. In response to the panel's recommendation, we're bringing forth this legislation.

In August 2007, as a result of the recommendations made by the citizens' panel, Premier McGuinty announced up to \$4 million to implement an organ donation strategy. At that time, we stated that in order to encourage more living donations through increased supports, the government would, among other initiatives, consult with employer and labour groups on providing job security for living donors with legislative protection. The organ donor leave we are proposing is consistent with the province's organ donation strategy. It furthers the objectives of the strategy and reinforces the government's commitment to improving rates of organ donation in the province.

As I have noted, this proposed legislation has not come out of the clear blue sky; it has come about because the citizens of this province have said, "This is what we need," and this is what we need.

Just a personal story: I have a relative who is currently undergoing dialysis and is a candidate for a kidney transplant. He is actually one of the lucky ones. He has someone who is a match for donation and is willing to provide a kidney.

Transplantation is a serious consideration for both the donor and the recipient. There are risks for both people. It's not something that's done lightly. I've not brought forward this legislation for the consideration of the House without understanding the nature and the impact of what we are doing. This is a serious matter. Although the number of employees and employers who are affected by this initiative is expected to be relatively small, it is no small matter for the individuals affected. The proposed leave would apply to employees who are donating all or part of the following organs: kidney, liver, pancreas, small bowel or lung.

0910

Kidney and liver transplants are the most common types of living organ donation. Members of this House understand the importance of this legislation, but some have suggested that the bill is unnecessary as most employers would provide consent in any case. While we would hope that is so, donors want a guarantee, and this will provide their guarantee. It removes a potential barrier, particularly in this current unstable economic time. It is just one part of an overall initiative to increase organ donations. It provides the unpaid, job-protected leave that people say they need. It is one less thing for organ donors to have to concern themselves with. It re-enforces the fund that was established last April by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to reimburse donors for reasonable expenses and lost wages. That fund and the legislation before you would complement each other by helping to get rid of financial barriers to organ donations.

We have before us a bill that is part of a whole strategy. The people of Ontario and the government are working in partnership to reduce the barriers to organ donation and increase the number of donors. I ask the members of the House to join me and carry out the wishes of the people of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jeff Leal):** Further debate: the member from Brampton West.

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** I rise today to speak in support of Bill 154, the Employment Standards Amendment Act (Organ Donor Leave) 2009.

Yes, this is an important bill. It is important only to the few people who will ever be asked to donate an organ. The number of employees and employers who would be affected by this proposed initiative is expected to be small—in the past fiscal year, only 260 transplants were done with donations from living donors—but when it is important, it is very important.

In Ontario, there are approximately 1,700 people on organ transplant waiting lists, and every three days,

someone on this waiting list dies. We want to help increase the number of organ donations; we want to increase the number from living donors. We want to increase organ donations across the board. This bill would help support that goal by providing unpaid, job-protected leave for people who donate an organ. By providing this leave, we would help to remove one of the potential barriers to organ donation.

In 2007, our Premier announced Ontario's organ donation strategy. This included a program for reimbursing expenses of living organ donors. The expenses covered by this program include certain travel, parking and transit, meals, accommodation, meal allowance, and a subsidy for loss of income after surgery.

These are very difficult economic times for working people. By providing these expenses, along with job-protected leave, we hope to make more organ donations possible. We also know that these are difficult times for employers. As we have noted, we expect that the number of employees who take this leave will be small, and so the number of employers affected will also be very small.

We held consultations. Employers who responded to the consultations supported this proposed leave and made suggestions about what the specific elements of the leave should be, such as the need for reasonable notice prior to leave. They also asked that we require a medical certificate for leave. This is something we've done. They asked that leave be unpaid. This is something we have also done. We listened to their concerns; we listened to their suggestions. We understand the concerns of business.

We feel we have found the right balance, which will have a small impact on business but a large impact on people's lives. This is why I urge my friends and colleagues in the House to support Bill 154.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jeff Leal):** Comments and questions?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** We just received Bill 154, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 in respect of organ donor leave, yesterday, but on the surface it certainly looks like something we would be supporting. I think that anything we can do to encourage people to get involved in organ donation in this province is a positive step.

I know there have been a number of members who have had private members' bills in the past that have taken different approaches to trying to encourage greater awareness of organ donation. I know that Peter Kormos, the member from Welland, had a private member's bill with one approach and as well, Frank Klees, the member from Newmarket-Aurora, had a private member's bill that, as I recall, required you to make a decision when you applied for a health card or for a driver's licence. You had to choose either yes, no, or undecided, but you had to decide something. That way everyone who was applying for a health card, which would be most of the people in the province, or a driver's licence, would at least be aware and have to think for a moment about organ donation.



Recently—just last week, of course—we had the grand chief of Nishnawbe Aski Nation here at Queen's Park doing a press conference: Grand Chief Stan Beardy, who's taking a leadership role in producing a brochure and educating the Nishnawbe Aski Nation's people on the importance of organ donation. It's great to see Grand Chief Beardy taking that leadership role.

I certainly think education and awareness are important. This will be a small step to making it easier for someone to leave their place of work and not be penalized, and know they have a job to come back to after they've made an organ donation. Certainly we should commend anyone who makes that decision to actually donate an organ and realize they're giving another person a second chance at life.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jeff Leal):** Further comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I will be doing my lead on this; the government is indulging me.

I can use an hour standing on my head on the issue of organ donation. I've got some things to say about that. We've been passionate about the need to eliminate the waiting lists, we in the New Democratic Party, with some radical reform of the whole organ donor regime. We've got to be radical. We've got to be bold, because lives are at stake. People are dying every day on waiting lists while good organs are being burned and buried.

We're going to vote for this bill; of course we are—not that the bill will change the reality much, because I've asked the government to come up with a single worker who has been fired, for instance, because they took some time off to be a living donor. The government may well come up with one before we're finished with this. So the bill is inoffensive, but it's offensive in that it doesn't really meaningfully increase access to organs for people on waiting lists, including little kids.

Andrea Horwath is going to be speaking to this in short order. As I say, the government's indulging me. I go to a House leaders' meeting at 9:45 and the government is indulging me by letting me, as we say here, stand down my lead. But I look forward to the chance to speak to this bill because we've got to, once again, radically engage the public to encourage them to support and, in fact, to demand real reform in organ donation. All of the money that's been spent, all of the advertising, Don Cherry notwithstanding, hasn't radically or dramatically increased the number of organ donor cards being signed, yet we know that the vast majority of Ontarians want their organs to be used. Ontarians, Canadians, are people of goodwill. They expect them to be used. Well, if they expect them to be used, why do we have a presumed denial regime rather than a presumed consent?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jeff Leal):** Further comments?

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell:** I'm very pleased to rise to enter the debate on Bill 154. I stand in this House and let the members know that I will be supporting this bill.

One of the stories that I like to tell from when I was elected in 2003 has certainly given me a whole new

insight into how organ transplants can affect families on an individual basis. If the members will remember, we had a quilt in the House. Those who had donated their organs signed the quilt on behalf of the family member. One of the stories was from my riding of Bruce county. There was a woman who was here that day, and the organ was donated on behalf of her son. She had also learned about organ transplants because her nephew had passed away a year before in a car accident, as had her son. She then told the story about the decision to donate her son's organs and the work that she did with her sister for her son. I can tell you that the recipients of the organs—when we heard the difference that it made in the young children's lives, we, as members of the Legislature, must do what we can to ensure that the process continues to move forward. Bill 154 is another step moving in that direction, to allow organs to move from those who have met an untimely death so that the recipients are available and ready. We need to continue to work diligently on that. I will be speaking at length, so I look forward to that opportunity.

0920

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jeff Leal):** Further comments?

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** Who can argue with what's being presented here today? But again, I think it's one of those bills that we're really missing the message on, and that is to put something into this bill that affects shortening the list. I don't think it's clear in this bill whether or not that's going to happen.

I know there will be job-protected leave for those people—"generous" is even a trite word for what is happening here—who really give of themselves in the fullest sense to help another fellow human being. That is admirable, but I really don't believe that this protected leave of absence is going to be the straw that broke the camel's back when somebody decides that they want to be an organ donor. I really don't believe that's going to do it. Whether or not this has any effect on that 1,700-person waiting list is very doubtful.

The minister says that the Ontario government is committed to boosting organ donations. I don't see anything in this bill that makes that happen. So again, it's one of those bills where I think there's—I don't know. I guess I would call it more symbolism than substance. That's what's happening here. It's an opportunity lost. It's a good idea. It's a great idea. But what are we really going to get from it?

I would be happy if, as this bill moves forward, there are amendments put forward that strengthen this bill and really make a difference to that 1,700 waiting list.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jeff Leal):** We'll go back to the member for Brampton West, who will finish his comments and wrap-up.

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** Organ donation is never an easy issue for anyone—the recipient or the donor. Bill 154 is just one step further that we're taking to keep the organ donation subject on the radar. As I stated before, the impact on business will be very small.



As well, once in every three days a person dies because of a lack of organ donation, and one death is way too many. I know the list is huge. We have 1,700 people on the waiting list, and our government, our minister, is committed to bringing those numbers down.

In my community, whenever I go to the local temple, I remind people—the topic of organ donation is not an easy one for either side—to sign their organ donation cards, just to create further awareness of the importance of donating. With this bill, we are making the process of organ donation easier on those people who might be affected through a possible loss of job and income. Again, it's such a wonderful step to help those in need of an organ donation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jeff Leal):** Further debate? The honourable member for Sarnia—

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Lambton. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to see you in the chair this morning. I know you will do an admirable job there.

I would like to rise and comment on Bill 154. As a number of members have already said, it's an admirable reach to try to remove this waiting list for recipients who are on the list and donors who hopefully will step forward and take advantage of the unpaid leave. If they did have concerns about their job being there when they would return, those fears would now be alleviated to some extent.

As the member for Burlington said, it could be a missed opportunity to put maybe more emphasis on making that list smaller, so let's look forward, when we do go to committee, to attempting to make the bill better, to putting improvements in it and to making other communication efforts, as well, available that will move people off that list.

We should have moved this bill sooner, like last Christmas. Around Christmas, we were looking for more bills, work to do. We could have introduced it then and maybe have had it debated long before now if there was a real issue about this.

I think it's one of these feel-good bills. Like the member for Welland said, no one is going to vote against it at the end of the day. It's something we all agree with; it's something that needs to be done and should have been done a long time ago.

I understand that a member of our caucus, Mr. Klees, from Newmarket–Aurora, introduced a bill that would have necessitated, when you enrol for your licence or medical card, that you would have had to, at that time, made a declaration whether you want to be involved in an organ donor program. I understand that the member from Welland, as well, had issues around that.

Just to go over a little bit of the bill, the people who would be taking part in this would be eligible for unemployment insurance while they're on there for up to 13 weeks in the initial phase. I understand from my perusal of the bill that if there were further complications, they could extend that a further 13 weeks, with medical documentation from a doctor, for a total of 26 weeks.

From my reading of the bill, from what I can understand, an employer has to have at least 50 or more em-

ployees before they would be eligible. That's something I need to look into further. So maybe not everybody in the province of Ontario would be eligible for this as an organ donor. That's something that I'll have to work on with the minister and his PA to also determine. Maybe that is something we can iron out at committee.

The new section, as I understand it, applies to certain organs—kidney, liver, lung, pancreas and small bowel donations—and other organs and tissues that may be added by regulation at a later time.

At the present time, statistics show that there are approximately 1,700 people on the organ donor transplant list at any one time. This is certainly a list that we should try to reduce—reduce that wait time. Those family members who have members on that list or who are waiting for those organ donors and those organs—it's all about life itself, so anything we can do as a Legislature, as a province or as individuals to help reduce that list, I think, is very important.

I understand that, over time, living donors have become a more important part of these organ donations. They now comprise somewhere near 30% of the total transplants which are done in Ontario. Hopefully, with a bill like this and with improvements made to it through amendments at committee, we can bring that list up from 30% to maybe 50% or more. I think that would be an admirable reach.

Statistics show that in 2007-08, out of 863 transplants that were completed, 260 or more, which would be about 30% of these, came from living donors. When employers were consulted—and I'm glad to see that the minister did do that—they did have some concerns, and those that they expressed to us were that they needed to have a reasonable amount of notice for this leave in advance, they wanted to have medical documentation to determine the length of leave, and, at the end of the day, the leave should be unpaid.

The government, when they were drafting the bill, appears to have listened, and a lot of those concerns that were put forward by the business community appear to, at this time, have been included in this bill. Like I say, when we go to committee and have opportunities for people from the business community and the organ donor transplant list to have input as well, we'll see if there can be improvements made.

0930

The panel that was appointed in 2006 made numerous proposals to increase organ donations, including that the government enact legislation such as this. I say again: our party commends the minister for moving ahead with this bill. I think it should have been done a long time ago. Maybe it could have incorporated some of the ideas from Mr. Klees from Newmarket–Aurora and Mr. Kormos from Welland. He had ideas as well. Hopefully, at the end of the day, all of these can be incorporated to improve the bill. As the member for Burlington said, it's probably a missed opportunity to remove more people from the list. That, at the end of the day, is the ultimate goal.



I know the Minister of Health as well wants to see as many people off that list so that people can make a contribution to society and take the worry and the strain off families that are concerned about loved ones who are either on the list or going to make a donation of an organ themselves, that they have some employment to return to at that time. It's a big decision to be a donor in the first place, let alone if you had to worry about your job being there these days, with the state of the economy being what it is. It doesn't look like that's going to change any time soon either. Hopefully, as we move forward, there would be opportunities to improve this.

I did some checking on this and I did some research with the minister's office, and donors are eligible. I had questions of this asked of me in caucus. Yes, in fact, donors are eligible for employment insurance and recourse under the fund set up through the Ministry of Health in April 2008. The proposed job-protected leave would be unpaid and an employer would have no obligation under the proposed leave to pay any remuneration to the employee while he or she is on this leave to donate an organ. However, there could be obligations under certain collective agreements or employment contracts to provide some compensation during the leave of absence, and those would be individual cases governed by collective agreements or contracted services. The staff at Human Resources and Skills Development Canada have confirmed to us that organ donors may also qualify for sick benefits if they are unable to return to work following organ donation surgery, assuming they meet certain qualifying concerns.

As in any bill, the devil is in the details. In summing up, the intent of the bill is good. To me, it's another bill that would be very difficult for anyone to make an argument against. I certainly wouldn't be one who would do it, and I'm sure no one in any of the other caucuses would either.

At the end of the day, the main issue is reducing that list. Let's get it from 30% to maybe 50% or 60%. We can highlight issues like this through debate in the House, in committee and newsletters so that people in Ontario understand what we're doing here to try and reduce these wait lists and hopefully bring a better quality of life to those recipients who are on these lists, sometimes languishing for years. I would encourage everyone to support the bill and try to make improvements at committee.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jeff Leal):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** It's my pleasure to say a few words on the speech by the member for Sarnia-Lambton. I will be making remarks on this bill myself in very short order.

I think he's correct in his comments that the bill is a helpful bill. It's a bill that I think nobody in this chamber would be opposed to. However, I do believe it's pretty clear that the bill really won't do much at all in terms of reducing the waiting lists for organ donations, which continue to be quite high in this province. I say that because, of course, the bill does nothing to change the framework,

the regime, in which organ donation takes place in the province of Ontario. It simply provides opportunity to ensure that there's no threat of job loss, no threat that someone who decides to be an organ donor will then have some kind of employment-related repercussion. Certainly, that's something that we would want to make sure of, that if someone is doing the right thing by donating an organ and has to take time off work, their work is there for them.

I don't believe the bill speaks to issues of financially helping that person who is making the organ donation, in terms of being able to make sure that that person is able to take the dozen or so weeks that are necessary to go through the surgery and the recovery stage, and ensure that their income is maintained. That would be something that I think would be helpful as well. Unfortunately, I don't believe that that is in the bill.

However, that's one really small piece of the puzzle. Organ donations from live donors are what's covered off in this bill specifically around their employment. A heck of a lot more needs to change, and later on we'll be hearing from the critic from the New Democratic Party, Peter Kormos, who has spoken passionately and often about the need to completely change our system of organ donation. I'll be making remarks in that regard as well.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jeff Leal):** Further comment?

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** It's a pleasure to get up this morning and have some time to speak on this bill. I think it's a very important one, and I commend the Minister of Labour for doing what he did this morning in presenting this.

As I speak, I have a constituent from my riding over at Toronto General; two weeks ago, she took part in a double lung transplant. She's recovering nicely, and certainly this would fit right into what she is going through, a young gal who's certainly got a great outlook on life and, through cystic fibrosis, just needed that new opportunity in life. Someone in this province gave her that new lease on life. I was over to visit her just last week and was very, very excited about what this is going to do for her. In speaking in the House this morning, I would speak for my friend from Cornwall, who would say that this is the right thing to do, that this bill will support the goal of providing unpaid, job-protected leave for people who donate an organ.

In that regard, it was through the death of an individual, but when you have individuals putting their life on hold, their businesses on hold, their employment opportunities on hold to donate a kidney, to donate an organ, we as a province should have things in place that would help them. I think this bill is going to go a long way in that regard. I commend the minister for that and look to the day that this will receive passage through this House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jeff Leal):** Further comments and questions?

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** It's my pleasure this morning to comment on the speech of the member for Sarnia-Lambton. In effect, this bill guarantees the jobs of per-



sons who provide donor organs, and I think that is a good aim. It follows in the path we have already under the Employment Standards Act: guaranteed jobs of individuals who take a leave of absence for pregnancy.

I had the pleasure of introducing in this House a bill that would protect and guarantee the jobs of individuals who served with our armed forces and who served overseas. My bill only got to first reading. The government did, however, adopt it, and it has passed. So we presently have an Employment Standards Act in which the jobs of individuals bearing children are protected, and now those of soldiers serving in the armed forces overseas.

However, in this particular case, I do not believe this bill will satisfy the needs of those individuals seeking organs. This is a matter of life and death, and we already have presented in this House two excellent bills: one by my colleague the member from Newmarket–Aurora and the other by Peter Kormos, the member for Welland. Both of those bills, I do believe, would result in a sizable difference for people seeking organs. This bill is only a very small step. It's not a strike; it's in fact a ball that misses the mark.

0940

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jeff Leal):** Further comment?

I'll go back to the member for Sarnia–Lambton.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You're doing an admirable job this morning.

I'd like to thank the members from Hamilton Centre and from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry and also my colleague from Cambridge for their kind remarks this morning on the subject we are debating, Bill 154; with all these different numbers, it's hard to keep track of them.

To reiterate all the points they made, it's important that we move forward with this bill; make amendments when we get it to committee, where we can improve it; and support the organ donation program throughout Ontario and do everything we can to encourage more people to take part in organ donations to try to reduce that so-called 1,700 organ donor waiting list. I know that the goal would be to get it to zero. That's probably not possible overnight, but we should do everything, whether it's incorporating, over time, issues like the member for Newmarket–Aurora had in the bill he introduced—and the member for Welland, Mr. Kormos, had ideas—to improve bills like this, to do everything we can to reduce the wait list and make these individuals productive and well again so that they can go back to their families. They can be in the workplace, contributing to Ontario's society; they can be an important part of their family again; and their families can take that worry—one less thing—off their plate if they know their loved one will be able to return and be a valued member of society and also be able to contribute and they don't have to worry every day about their health.

Thank you again, and I look forward to further debate on the bill as we go forward.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jeff Leal):** Further debate?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** It's my pleasure to have an opportunity to speak to the bill on organ donation. The minister made his remarks earlier and spoke about his desire to bring this bill forward in a way that would increase opportunities for people to receive organ donations from live donors. The bill, as the minister indicated, provides employees who decide to become organ donors—who take that step and do that very selfless and important act of donating an organ to another person in need—with security around employment, so that the time it is necessary to take from work to be able to prepare for, undergo and then recuperate from the surgery—all that time that is taken off work—is not going to jeopardize that person's employment. As I said in my remarks a few moments ago, New Democrats are likely going to support this bill. It's a very minuscule step, but it's certainly a step in the right direction.

I say it is a minuscule step because right now we have a system of organ donation in Ontario that simply does not meet the needs of Ontarians. We know very well that there are people who are dying in this province every day because they cannot have access—because there is no access—to organs they so desperately need to save their lives.

In fact, just today there was an article in the Toronto Sun. The headline reads, "Teen's Desperate Plea." A 19-year-old woman is taking the search for a life-saving liver donor for her mom to Queen's Park. Her mom is very ill, suffering from a disease that will shut down her liver. Unfortunately, there is a blood type issue—the blood type of the mother is rather rare—and none of the other family members are in a position to donate a portion of their liver to help this woman survive.

We know that there are some 1,700 people on waiting lists for organ donation in the province of Ontario—1,700 people. Some of those people are children—some of those people are very small children—who have their whole lives ahead of them or face certain death if those organs are not found in time to save their lives.

What happens right now in Ontario? What happens is that through the driver's licensing system, we are able to sign an organ donor card, and we keep that card with us. If some tragedy were to occur where, by accidental or natural causes, we die, we pass, then the process begins where family is consulted. Even if your donor card says that you want to completely donate everything to medical science, to organ donation—everything—there's still a consultation process that goes on with family members.

First of all, we know that few people actually sign their donor card, even though Ontarians are generally very generous people by nature and very supportive of the idea of the commitment to doing things like donating organs after death. Yet people for one reason or another don't take the time; they don't take that card when they get their licence renewal and fill that card out. In their minds they think, "Oh sure, once I pass away, who cares what happens to my organs? Of course I would want my organs to go to a young person, or anybody, for that matter, who's in need, who would survive an otherwise



certain death if it wasn't for these organs." I feel that way and I know that many, many Ontarians feel that way. It's very clear. And yet, for whatever reason—because of the process, in fact, not for whatever reason—people just don't bother to make that happen. They don't bother to fill out their card, or when they do, there's sometimes disagreement with family members because they haven't taken the extra step. The extra step is actually talking to your family members about your wishes—very difficult conversations to have, of course, conversations about, "When I die, here's what I want to happen with my body; here's what I want to happen with my organs." It's not something that you tend to talk about on a regular basis. But I can tell you that many Ontarians are comfortable with that. They're okay with it. They think that it's the right thing to do.

After a person dies, the process then goes into—if there is a donation that's been indicated on the donor card and, of course, the family agrees, then a lot of things can happen. There are specific donations that can occur that are not even noticeable. So some family members or some people might think, "If I donate my organs, I am not going to be in a position or my family is not going to be in a position to have the traditional funeral" that some families have, that some cultures have. That's an open-casket viewing, an opportunity for people to come and celebrate the life and mourn the death of the loved one. But in fact, that's not the case. There are many kinds of donations that can occur that still provide for the open-casket type of funeral: bones, tendons, veins, heart valves, skin, corneas, eye tissue—all of these things can be very carefully removed so that there is no impact whatsoever in terms of the opportunity for a traditional funeral with an open-casket viewing.

If there's a situation where people have not spoken, unfortunately, to their loved ones, even these kinds of harvesting, if you want to call it that, even these kinds of opportunities to achieve those donations are lost, because it is up to the family, ultimately. It can be overridden, even if someone has signed their donor card.

As I was saying earlier, there are about 1,700 people in Ontario waiting for organs. Apparently, in 2008 some 549 transplants actually took place. In 2004, 242 patients died waiting for life-saving transplants in Canada. Over 120 of those were in Ontario alone. There have never been longer wait times and more people waiting for a transplant, and there have never been more deaths while people are waiting. If that doesn't signal to this government, if that doesn't signal to every one of us in this place that we have to significantly overhaul our system of organ donation, then I don't know what does. It's very obvious and apparent. It's obvious and apparent by the statistics. It's obvious and apparent by the article in today's Toronto Sun about the young woman who's here at Queen's Park today to try to bring attention to the issue of her mother's need for a liver.

0950  
New Democrats have brought forward what we think is a plausible solution. I say "a plausible solution" be-

cause it is a solution, a system, a regime that already exists in a number of other jurisdictions that have progressed so much further than we have here in Ontario in terms of organ donation, in terms of the ability of people to get the organs that they need.

It's called the system of presumed consent. My colleague from Welland, Mr. Kormos, has been an extremely vocal advocate of this type of model. He has brought this issue to the table time after time after time. When New Democrats say that of course we'll support this bill, we do so knowing that it is extremely minor, minor to the extreme, in terms of getting at the crux of the issue, the core issue. The core issue is that our system simply does not provide enough organs to save the lives of people in Ontario who need those donations.

Presumed consent does something a little different. Instead of relying on the people who would normally think it's okay, who would support it and believe they would be doing a good thing and a good deed, and having all those people be proactive in terms of signing a card and then going through the process of having that card legitimized, more or less, by surviving family members, have people sign a card who adamantly do not want to have their organs donated.

This is the solution to the problem we have in Ontario right now with lack of organ donation. Many people think it's the right thing to do. Many people not only support the concept, but believe they should be part of that process, of that opportunity to help people survive in the case of a needed organ donation.

Very few, some 2%, adamantly do not want to have their bodies harvested for organs after death. Only 2% have that adamant sense that they do not want that to happen. I respect that; I think everybody respects that. So then why isn't it that the people who are most motivated, those who don't want, for any reason, their organs to be harvested, who don't want to donate after death—why isn't it that we just ask that small percentage of people to sign the card, to be registered as someone who doesn't want to have their organs donated? It makes so much more sense. Why try to take the opposite position, where you're trying to get 98% of people to sign a card? It's silly. It's opposite of what would be a very functional, simple and direct way of dealing with the problem. The result would be enormous, in terms of the numbers of organs that would be available to save lives of people in Ontario.

If we took the 2%—maybe it's 5%; who knows? But take the small number of people who do not wish to have their organs donated and get those people on a registry, very clearly indicating that they do not want to have their organs donated. That's fair; fair is fair.

But instead, we do it the opposite way. We do it in a way that people have to take that card and sign it, and then the follow-up happens, when the family members have the opportunity to override the decision. It's no wonder that we have 1,700 people on a waiting list in this province. It's no wonder that we have children dying because of lack of access to organs.



The presumed consent model is one that works in many other jurisdictions. It works in places where it's been instituted. I'm going to list a number of jurisdictions around the world that have already instituted organ donation on a presumed consent model: Austria, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Luxembourg, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Switzerland, Latvia, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, Poland, Greece and Singapore. The opt-out rate in these nations is about 2%. I can't imagine it would be any different in a place like Ontario. Again, tracking that 2% is so much easier, so much more straightforward, than tracking the 98% who do wish to participate in the organ donation process.

The entire process of having a shift from what we have now, which is asking people to sign the card, versus the presumed consent model, is one that promotes the whole idea that as human beings we really do want to help each other, we really do want to make sure that we're doing everything we can to help our fellow person. It's kind of like a sense of value: a value of unselfishness, a value of really doing whatever we can for folks who are in desperate need. In the case of organ donation, of course, you don't need those organs anymore. You've died. So the idea that you could save someone else's life, that you could actually make such a difference, not only in that individual's life, but the families of those individuals—their whole circle of acquaintances and family members and co-workers could be so positively affected by your selfless act, upon death, of making sure that your organs can be utilized by someone else. It's an amazing act of unselfishness, it's an amazing act of camaraderie and of humanity, and I believe that most Ontarians believe that it's the right thing to do and have no problem with the concept.

My colleague Mr. Kormos, in the way that he so eloquently does, made quite a funny comment yesterday in the media about how when he dies, you'll find a tattoo on his stomach that says, "Open here and retrieve organs at will," or something of that nature. It's kind of funny, and it puts a bit of lightness in the conversation. Because do you know what? It's a tough conversation to have, as I mentioned earlier. What we know for sure is that most people feel that way, not only from the perspective of knowing that once the lights are out, the lights are out—once you're no longer alive, you have no use for your physical being. Your physical body means nothing. It's irrelevant to you. Your whole life has ended. There's nothing left.

There are all kinds of issues around spirituality and different religious beliefs around what happens to a person after death, but I believe all of those really have nothing to do with the physical body. The physical body is the piece that would help so many other people, and it seems to me that most major religions are supportive of the concept of organ donation.

For some, it's a squeamish topic, or some simply don't like having the conversation, or they don't want to have that happen to them once they pass away. That's fine. As

a society, we can respect that. But if we go to a situation, a model, a framework, that shifts the way that the public thinks about this, to say, "If you don't want to, that's fine. We respect that. Here's where you register to make sure that your organs are not taken because you don't want them to be," and then the rest of us, everybody else, are in a situation where when we die our organs automatically are put into the system to help those 1,700 people, to help those children, to help those parents, to help those people who need an organ—it seems to me that that would be the best way to do it.

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It seems to me that the bills that have been brought forward by New Democrats like Peter Kormos are ones that specifically set out that not only would there be automatic presumed consent but there would be no opportunity for family members to override. So then the onus becomes part of the individual's responsibility if they don't want to be part of the program, but the program itself is universal in terms of ensuring that every Ontarian is a potential organ donor.

There are a number of other things that need to happen to make this change, to make this shift. It seems fairly radical in our minds, I know, and there's always quite a bit of controversy when this issue arises and when it's debated and discussed in the public realm, and that's a good thing because it's through that conversation, it's through that dialogue, it's through that debate that people's fears are assuaged, that people's squeamishness is reduced. A big part of what needs to happen in the context of moving forward in making our organ donation system one that works is to have the conversation more often, so I commend the minister in bringing this bill forward because once again it gives us an opportunity to debate the issues and have the conversation with the Ontario public about organ donation.

It also is incumbent upon us here, and others throughout the educational system, throughout the medical system, to bring forward these issues and talk to folks about them in their own communities and in their own contexts. It's important that we broaden the understanding, the awareness and the education around organ donation, not only from the perspective of what's out there in other jurisdictions, as I've already laid out in my remarks earlier, but also of what is currently happening within our system and how many people are in fact waiting and how many people are dying while they're waiting, how unacceptable that is, and how the system that we currently have is not one that leads to the kinds of organ donation volumes that we need and can easily get if we turn it around to a presumed consent instead of presumed denial, because that is what we have now. Right now we have presumed denial. We presume that people do not want their organs used after death unless they sign the card. All we're saying is: Let's switch that around to presumed consent so that we can presume that if a person dies, unless they have registered and unless they have indicated very clearly that they do not want to have their organs donated, then in fact they become a life-saver.



Every Ontarian upon death can become a life-saver; they can literally save someone's life. I believe that those are the values of Ontario and every Ontarian has that value and would love to be able to help someone else out. Let's just make the system work so that it's easy to do that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jeff Leal):** Comments or questions?

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the intervention of my friend from Hamilton East.

This is an issue that is important to all Ontarians. We know that approximately 1,700 people in this province are on organ transplant waiting lists. Every three days, someone in Ontario on the waiting list dies. We want to help increase the number of organ donations. In the last fiscal year, only 260 transplants required a donation from living donors. This bill will help support that goal by providing unpaid, job-protected leave for people who donate an organ. By providing this leave, we will help to remove one of the potential barriers to organ donation.

Last year, the Premier of Ontario, Mr. McGuinty, announced Ontario's organ donation strategy. This included a program for reimbursing the expenses of living organ donors. The expenses covered by the program include travel, parking and transit, meals, accommodation, meal allowance, and a subsidy for lost income after surgery for living donors. By providing these expenses, along with job-protected leave, we hope to make organ donations possible. The government feels that it has found the right balance which will have a very small impact on our business community, which is one of the concerns, but will have a very large impact on the lives of those people who need the donation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jeff Leal):** Further comments? The member from Halton.

*Applause.*

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** I appreciate the applause.

A few comments that the member made, that this bill is an absolutely minimal bill: It is about the least that you can do and still do something. It's too bad that the government had an opportunity, particularly during these very difficult economic times, to do something that was worthwhile and could make a large difference and they've chosen to take this path which will make the minimal amount of difference a bill could make, in my opinion. I agree with the speaker on this bill and her comments that it's too bad this opportunity is one that is going to be missed for a lot of people.

I don't know if I'd go as far as the member would—as far as the negative billing, I call it—where you have to fill out the form not to donate your organs. I'm not sure I'd want to go that far with the organ donations, but in some aspects, for instance eye tissue, you might want to go that far. When you're taking bodily organs, there are some people who feel very strongly about that. Personally, my card is filled out. When I go, you can help yourself. You can have whatever you want. But it makes—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** Yes, just make sure I'm not breathing any more. But after that, help yourself.

I think that's an individual decision people have to make, but this bill could be strengthened to make it a lot more palatable to the people of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jeff Leal):** Further comments?

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I just want to begin briefly by offering a few thank yous in terms of those responsible for bringing us forward to the point we're at today. It's interesting that we have two Ministers of Health in the room with us today, one former and one current. I know the former Minister of Health, George Smitherman, had a lot to do with getting us to the point we're at today, and our current minister, David Caplan, as well has been involved in helping to carry this file forward. So I do want to make sure that we remember them and thank them very much for the work they've done.

The member opposite has expressed this legislation, as have others, in terms of it being minimalist in its approach. I think it's important that we remind people who are interested in this issue and who are paying attention to this debate as we move forward that the recommendation brought forward today in Bill 154 is a recommendation that came from the citizens panel. This was a panel that was struck one or two years ago that drafted a series of recommendations, one of which was that we move forward in the way we are moving forward here today: to provide job-protected, unpaid leave for live organ donors in the province of Ontario. So while we express this as maybe not having gone far enough, I think it's important that we remind people in the province that this is one of the recommendations that came out of the citizens' panel.

I also want to mention and thank, in my riding of Thunder Bay—Atikokan, Grand Chief Stan Beardy. As some of you have heard in this Legislature, very recently the Grand Chief came forward with his own initiative around raising the issue of organ donation awareness within his communities. I come from northern Ontario, and I think many of you know that the health outcomes in northern Ontario are not as good as they should be. They're not as good as the rest of the province of Ontario, and even more so when it comes to our First Nations population in the province of Ontario. The initiative of Grand Chief Beardy will take us a couple of steps forward in terms of trying to raise the profile of this issue.

I'm pleased to have had the opportunity to speak for a couple of minutes and look forward to the support of the opposition parties on Bill 154.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jeff Leal):** Further comments?

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I'm pleased to comment on the remarks made by the member for Hamilton Centre.

I think we all agree that organ donation is certainly something that people should consider. It's distressing when you have a family member who is on that waiting list. In my case, we did have a family member who wait-



ed for a very long time. When people are suffering life-threatening illnesses as it is, then to know they are a step away from the prospect of a successful transplant, certainly adds a great deal of stress for those family members and, obviously, for the individual.

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As time has passed and medicine has advanced, certainly in my lifetime, the whole notion of transplants has evolved. So I think that no one is going to dispute the intent of this bill, in providing a mechanism that would encourage people to feel that they could make this kind of potentially life-saving contribution.

I would, however, be remiss if I didn't also suggest that I think that it opens up the issues around health care and the importance of providing equity. As a member representing a high-growth area, we don't see the dollars coming in an equitable way and certainly would like to see that addressed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jeff Leal):** Wrap-up: the honourable member from Hamilton Centre.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** It seems to me—and I might be able to get some advice from the Clerk or the Hansard table—that I may have forgotten to ask for unanimous consent to stand down the lead of our critic at the beginning of my remarks. So I'm asking if the House would please indulge me and allow me to ask for unanimous consent, at this point, to stand down the lead of our critic.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jeff Leal):** Agreed? Agreed.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

I want to thank the members for Algoma-Manitoulin, Halton, Thunder Bay-Atikokan and York-Simcoe for their remarks.

It seems to me that there is a sense of commonality around the chamber, in that people really do believe that we need to do something to jump-start the number of organ donations that we see happening in the province of Ontario. People are saying, pretty much unanimously, "Yes, this bill is supportable."

The government thinks that it has gone far enough with this bill. Of course, on this side of the House, we don't think that the government has gone far enough.

Even if you're looking at the bill itself on its merits, in terms of trying to encourage people—for living donors—to make that step, the government is not prepared to ensure that lost wages are paid. They talk in the bill about a subsidy to help people financially. It's really hard to take a couple of weeks or a couple of months off work, in fact, and only be able to rely on some kind of subsidy. If the government was serious about making sure that living donors had every opportunity to take that on, then it would be very clear that complete wage subsidy would be implemented—not only wages, but pension payments, pension instalments, benefits. Everything would be covered off. That would ensure people would not be left financially at risk after getting into the process of being a live donor.

Having said that, we think it's about presumed consent. We think the whole system needs to change, and I know our critic will be talking about that a little later.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jeff Leal):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I'm pleased to add a few more comments in regard to Bill 154.

As others have said, we're all very proud. I think there's going to be general consensus on the bill in support, from all parties, including both opposition parties, when this particular piece of legislation is called for a vote.

Some have indicated they don't feel that the bill is going far enough. But as I mentioned in my two-minuter, as a northerner, any piece of legislation that comes before this House that has the intention or the capacity to extend health care in the province of Ontario is something that's easy to support. As northerners, as I said in my original two-minuter on this, we have had, traditionally and chronically in northwestern Ontario, and in northeastern Ontario as well, I would expect, health outcomes that are not what we all feel they need to be. There are a variety of reasons associated with those less-than-we-would-hope-for health outcomes in northern Ontario, but nevertheless they are there. This bill will be a piece of being able to move forward in enhancing the health outcomes for people in northwestern Ontario, where I come from.

As I said earlier, First Nations communities, specifically, within northwestern Ontario have health outcomes that are even lower than those associated with the rest of the population in northwestern Ontario. I referenced in my earlier comment the initiative brought forward by Grand Chief Stan Beardy.

While these are amendments and regulatory changes under the Ministry of Labour, this is, at the end of the day, a health issue. As I recall, when we came into government in 2003, the province of Ontario was spending somewhere in the order of about \$30 billion on health care. Today, in the province of Ontario, we are spending somewhere north of \$40 billion on health care. In this province, we are approximating or coming close to spending close to 50% of our total provincial budget on health care.

So when people talk about this as being minimalist, about it not going far enough and about the expenses part of this legislation not being enough, well, that's fine. We can always have that discussion. It's a question of degree, I suppose, but when you place it in some context around how much we're spending on health care already in the province of Ontario, I think all of a sudden the people who are watching the debate, who are interested in the issues, start to say to themselves, "It's quite interesting, isn't it? Some \$40 billion plus being spent on health care in the province of Ontario." It is no insignificant amount, obviously.

As the costs on that particular budget continues to rise, we find ourselves in the position of having to offer constraints and restraints in other areas of the provincial budget. Any time you are spending almost 50% out of your total provincial budget on one ministry, we need to



be cautious in terms of the way we move forward on any of these issues and in terms of being very careful when we're spending provincial dollars.

Some of the expenses that are going to be covered—and I haven't heard any of the other members in the opposition speak about this part of it—include travel, parking and transit, meals, accommodation, meal allowance and a subsidy for loss of income after surgery. Those are some of the things that are going to be put forward. Not only is the job protection leave a part of this legislation, but there is an expenses-paid part for those who are providing the organ donation. It's extremely significant that we talk about that.

I also want to mention the citizens' panel—Speaker, I see you're calling me—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jeff Leal):** It now being 10:15 of the clock, I'm required to recess the House until 10:30 a.m.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

*The House recessed from 1016 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's my pleasure to introduce the Patterson family, with their son Teddy—Sylvia, John and Teddy, in the Speaker's gallery.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to introduce to this House a number of home care workers who have made their way to Queen's Park today: Claire Dahms, Theresa Clapham, Lucy Lavarinko, Joan Gray, Madeline LeBrun, Anne Fisher, Dianne Anderson and Pam Sulyma.

We also have members of SEIU with us—Service Employees International Union, Local 1—starting with their secretary-treasurer, Cathy Carroll, Caroline Demers, Sue Saville, Linda Micks, Charlie Renaud, David Thatcher and Cathy Ryan.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** On behalf of the Minister of the Environment and page Rachel Goldstein, we'd like to welcome her mother, Liz VanDerkerkhof, and her father, David Goldstein, sitting in the east members' gallery today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

There being no further introductions, it is now time for oral questions.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** My question is to the Premier. The Speaker ruled on March 25, 2008, and I'll just do part of the quote: "It is ... a matter of courtesy and respect for this institution that all important announcements be made here first...." Yet yesterday, you had an opportunity to share the details of the deficit number with members of this Legislature on numerous occasions as questions were asked, and you chose to make the announcement of the \$18-billion deficit outside of this

House, at the Empire Club, to an exclusive group of people who had paid for the privilege to be there. Why did you not make the announcement in this House yesterday?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We have responded to a number of questions from the opposition on the deficit. We have indicated in this House that there would be a deficit. We were never asked by the opposition what the deficit was, and then when—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Please continue.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The size has been the subject of tremendous speculation. We're here today to answer questions about the deficit. It is a serious matter. We're very concerned about the people who lost their jobs at Stelco. We're here to answer questions about that.

We think that this is a big enough issue that we should speak about it here in the House, we should speak about things out there, and we should be open and transparent at all times.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I go again to the Premier, who supposedly is the leader of the MPPs in this House. You have demonstrated since 2005 that you are totally, totally paralyzed in responding to the concerns that have been expressed by the official opposition and by business leaders. We have been warning you about a manufacturing crisis. We have been warning you about job losses. Yet you've said, "It's only a little bit of contraction." I say to you today, will you acknowledge that, as leader of this once-great province, you have been derelict in your responsibilities?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. Order.

Minister.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Ontario is a great province and the people of this province deserve more from the Conservative Party of Ontario than to talk down our economy and to talk down—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mrs. Witmer:** Under our leadership, this province and the policies that we introduced allowed for the creation of one million new jobs. We've seen jobs lost day after day after day, and we heard more about job losses yesterday. I say to you again, you showed disrespect yesterday by announcing your deficit outside of this House. I ask you today, do you, Mr. Premier, have a plan to deal with this deficit, or are you going to leave this to the next government to deal with?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We certainly won't leave a \$5.6-billion hidden deficit like that party did. And we

certainly won't talk Ontario down like that member does. We laid out a plan last year where we invested more than \$9 billion in infrastructure; that member and her party voted against it. We reduced business tax by \$3.5 billion as part of a plan to stimulate the economy more than a year ago; that member and her party voted against it. The world economy is in a crisis, tens of thousands of jobs are being lost around the world, and that member is concerned about where we say this, that or the other thing.

We will build on the plan we've laid out. It will be here on March 26. We hope you will vote in favour of a plan to stimulate this economy and stop talking down this great—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

### MANUFACTURING JOBS

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** To the Premier: This question is about your government's lack of leadership and planning with respect to manufacturing job losses in Ontario. US Steel, a proud international corporation, one of the best in the steel working world, recently moved to Ontario and bought Stelco. You know the bad news of yesterday. You've mismanaged the economy.

On behalf of 2,000 steelworkers who have now lost their jobs both in Hamilton and Lake Erie works and Nanticoke, as Premier of Ontario, what are you going to do about these job losses in primary industries?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I welcome the question. What I want to do at the outset is extend our feelings and thoughts to those families who are affected by this in a direct way. There's always the danger that we will get caught up in numbers, whether that's GDP growth or budgetary projections.

But when it comes down to families, they are much more concerned about some sense of security, some sense of hopefulness for their future and for the future that their children are going to face. It's a difficult time for the city of Hamilton. I just got off the phone with Mayor Eisenberger, and we had a long chat about how we might better work together to improve the economic opportunities there. We've been working long and hard with the city of Hamilton over an extended period of time. I know this has been the result of a huge drop in global demand for steel.

1040

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I'll ask you to focus on the problem. Hilton works and Lake Erie works are now closed; Lake Erie, one of the largest, most modern integrated steelworks in North America. You knew this day was coming. In fact, you supported our motion in December 2005, when we asked you for an immediate plan for the manufacturing sector in specific communities. Auto, manufacturing—they all use steel. You can't lose 270,000 manufacturing jobs based on steel and not have a plan for this gutting of primary industry. It's been nearly four years. When will you announce your industrial strategy, a strategy for primary industry, specifically to deal with this devastation that was announced yesterday?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** My honourable colleague will know, because I'm sure he pays attention to these kinds of things, that there's been a dramatic plunge in global demand for steel. There is a much lesser demand for steel originally used in construction, a much lesser demand for steel originally used in the production of cars and a much lesser demand for steel used in the production of appliances. That's experienced here in Canada, North America, South America, Europe, Asia and other places as well. It's affecting the global economy.

We have, as my colleague knows, put forward a number of measures to strengthen manufacturing during the past several years, none of which that party has supported, including eliminating capital taxes for Ontario manufacturers. It would have been nice to have that support back then rather than simply putting forward these kinds of concerns here today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Premier, we called for your support for an all-party committee to deal with this, for all of us to work together. At this point, the steelmaking community needs answers. Thousands and thousands of lives are on hold while you apparently remain paralyzed by indecision. Locally, in my riding, auto part jobs are gone in the west; you've destroyed our tobacco economy and the 9,000 jobs that go with that; and, three years of native disputes have crushed our building industry. Your budget is already a month late.

I ask you again: What positive actions will you be taking to help people at Hilton and Lake Erie works, actions required between now and the March 26 budget, the late date for the budget? We need some answers, Premier.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Just as a bit of an aside, our March 26 budget will be earlier than each and every budget ever put forward by the past Conservative government. In fact, they put out six in May and one in June, just so we're clear on that score.

Let me speak to you about some of the things we have been doing which they don't support when it comes to strengthening our economy. We're cutting business taxes by \$3 billion; they don't support that. We're investing \$60 billion over 10 years in infrastructure to create jobs; they don't support that. We've put over \$1 billion into innovation, research and commercialization projects; they don't support that. We continue to partner with businesses. We've landed \$8 billion in new investment. We're investing in the skills and education of our people. They don't support measures to strengthen this economy.

### ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** My question is for the Premier. Yesterday was a very curious day. The finance minister delivered a speech aimed at rewriting the McGuinty government's record. He said, "As far back as 2006 our government was talking about the gathering clouds of a slowing US economy." I want to quote the same finance minister from his budget speech, not even a



year ago, where he said, "Over the next three years, we expect to see another 270,000 new jobs."

My question to the Premier is this: Which version of history from your government is accurate—the speech that was made up for yesterday or the budget speech that boasted about 270,000 new jobs just 11 months ago?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'll let the people of Ontario be the judge when it comes to what is history and what is not. I look forward to that judgment.

I think our shared responsibility at this point in our history is to do two things in particular. One of those is to lend what support we might to families who are being hurt by this recession. At the same time, and just as importantly, we have to begin to build a stronger foundation for a new economy, one that will speak to the aspirations we have for our children and our grandchildren. For the past five years, we have significantly invested in and revitalized our public services. We have better schools, better health care and better protections for our environment. At the same time, we are building infrastructure in this province like never before. We have a stronger workforce than we've ever had before. We've done more to support innovation and build an innovation culture than ever before. That is a very strong foundation on which we intend to continue building.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Once again, this is the McGuinty government's Ontario economic outlook and fiscal review of the fall. In this, when you look at the background documents, the McGuinty government was actually cutting what it was going to invest in infrastructure and in new capital construction. It's all here in the figures. At the same time, what did we see yesterday: 2,100 jobs gone in Hamilton; 75 jobs gone at Quaker Oats in Peterborough; 261 jobs gone at Vale Inco in Sudbury; and 100 more in Cornwall, Toronto and Mississauga—lost. When are we going to see a jobs plan from the McGuinty government rather than efforts to revisit and rewrite your own sorry history?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Yes, there is such a thing as a global recession. Yes, it is affecting the province of Ontario. Yes, it is causing job losses here. And yes, it is very difficult for anyone of us in this House, save and except for the leader of the NDP, who says that he can prevent any of that from happening here in Ontario. Perhaps he has some secret solution of which the rest of the people on this planet remain unaware.

When we've had opportunities to lend strength to our economy, time and time again, the leader of the NDP and his party have voted against that. When we've sought to shelter people who are being hurt by the economy, he stood against those measures as well. We said we wanted to put in place an Ontario child benefit, and we're doing that. He voted against that. We put in place 22,000 new, affordable child care spaces. He voted against that. We're raising rates for social assistance. He voted against that. Putting in place new affordable housing units: He voted against those measures. So whether it comes to strengthening the economy or supporting families—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Once again, I think people wonder what world the Premier is on. Child care spaces are disappearing. People who lose their jobs fall into poverty. More schools are closing under the McGuinty government than closed under the former Conservative government because you haven't changed the funding formula. But the real issue is jobs. Seventy thousand good jobs are disappearing every month. The response of this government so far has been to commission a report by Professor Florida. When he was asked, "What should laid-off workers do?", his response was, "Maybe they can open an art gallery, or maybe they can get a job filling out tax returns." Tell me, Premier: Is this the McGuinty government's jobs plan for communities that are losing thousands of jobs every week—open an art gallery?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** In addition to the NDP choosing to stand in the way of enhancements when it comes to building on the strength of this economy and standing in the way of supports that we want to provide to families who are up against it through no fault of their own, we have yet another option that we've tendered in this Legislature. It's called the Green Energy Act. It is designed to put into place 50,000 new jobs and to give Ontarians access to clean and green electricity so that we can join together in the fight against climate change. What Ontarians now want to know is: Will the NDP also stand in the way of that piece of legislation? Will they stand in the way of those 50,000 new jobs? Will they stand in the way of clean electricity and stand in the way of our joint efforts to fight climate change?

Here's another opportunity for us to do something together to move forward in a progressive fashion on behalf of Ontarians. Are they with Ontarians or are they against them once more?

## MANUFACTURING JOBS

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Again to the Premier: Once again, the issue is jobs. I've looked at your bill to find a guarantee of jobs. In Quebec, any green energy projects have to have a 60%-Quebec-manufacture level. Is there such a thing in the McGuinty government's bill? No; it's not there. What we're afraid is going to happen is what we've seen over the last few years. The McGuinty government shovels \$235 million to General Motors without any guarantee that the new energy-efficient hybrid half-ton will be built in Ontario. The McGuinty government shovels \$100 million to Ford in Oakville and 1,000 workers get pink slips. The McGuinty government shovels \$77 million to Chrysler in Bramalea and we see a shift eliminated. Where is the jobs plan, Premier? As thousands of people lose their jobs every week, where is the McGuinty government's jobs plan?

1050

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** We have a jobs plan. Perhaps again the leader of the NDP or some members of the



opposition have some secret that might work in this regard. They might pretend that they can stop all job losses in the province of Ontario, but we will not make that pretence. What we will do is say we'll do everything that we possibly can to ensure that we are taking steps to strengthen this economy.

I say again, today in Ontario we are making massive investments in infrastructure. We're building hospitals, schools, roads, bridges, border crossings and public transit, and creating thousands and thousands of jobs through that work. The opposition, whether the official opposition or the NDP, oppose that kind of investment.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I challenge the Premier: \$235 million went out the door to General Motors. We didn't see new jobs; we saw thousands of people laid off. I ask, how is that a success? I continue to ask, where's the jobs plan? Quebec has a reasonable industrial hydro rate to sustain manufacturing jobs there. Wind turbines are being created there. Electric cars are being manufactured in Quebec. Solar components for solar power are now being manufactured in Quebec. Manitoba has implemented a refundable manufacturing investment tax credit to sustain manufacturing jobs there. Has the McGuinty government done any of these things? No, it hasn't. So I'm left to ask again: What is the McGuinty government's jobs plan, other than telling laid-off workers to open an art gallery?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Apparently life is better everywhere else. My mother used to tell me that the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence. I guess that is in part human nature. But when you remove yourself from Ontario, assume the position of the crow's nest and bring a global perspective, I don't know of any place on this planet where the grass is greener than it is here in the province of Ontario.

I sense a loss of confidence in our future in the opposition benches. I'll tell you why I am so confident about our future in this province: because I have confidence in the people of Ontario, their resourcefulness, their resilience, their perseverance, their courage, their determination to succeed, their track record. We're with the people of Ontario. We will build on our foundation and make this province stronger than ever. Our best years are yet to come.

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** You're a loser, Dalton.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Cambridge will withdraw the comment.

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** Certainly.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Withdraw the comment.

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** I withdraw.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I'm sure that the 2,100 workers in Hamilton who just found out that they're losing their jobs are going to take great confidence from a Premier who stands up day after day and still doesn't have a jobs plan.

Let me try again. Quebec requires that 60% of the manufacture of any transit vehicles that are used in Quebec has to be manufactured in Quebec. The United States have a similar policy, the buy-America policy. In fact, Alstom, manufacturer in France of transit vehicles, is now looking at setting up manufacturing operations in Quebec. Why? Because of the Quebec 60% content rule.

Can the Premier tell me: If it works in the United States and maintains good manufacturing jobs there, and if it's building new manufacturing jobs in Quebec, why has the McGuinty government failed to do the same thing here in Ontario?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** My honourable colleague keeps talking about 60% requirements in other jurisdictions. He maintains that there's a law to that effect in Quebec. I want to assure him there is no such law, and he should just do a little bit of research to confirm that.

The leader of the NDP may settle for 60%; we have chosen 82%—82% of all public investment going into public transit projects; 82% is being invested in the province of Ontario. He may settle for 60%; we've chosen 82%.

#### GOVERNMENT SPENDING

**Mr. Frank Klees:** To the Minister of Finance, who yesterday announced that his government will be adding \$18 billion to the debt of this province—that's \$18 billion more of spending than the government will receive in revenue. Since they took office, they increased spending in this province by \$27 billion, or 40%.

I want to ask the finance minister today, does he regret having spent \$400 million on casino renovations in Windsor, \$2.3 million by the OLG on the opening gala of Caesars in Windsor, \$8 million on a tourism study, \$2 million for incomplete reports and \$3.5 million spent by the Ministry of Education on hotel and conference centres? I have a list here of multi-millions of dollars of spending. Can the minister tell us today, will he admit that he—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** What I regret is that that member and his party added \$48 billion to the provincial debt in one of the highest growth periods in our history, and how quickly they forget. How quickly they forget that record; how quickly they forget that our debt-to-GDP ratio is lower today than when they left office, that we paid off their hidden \$5.5-billion deficit; how quickly they forget the state of affairs this province was left in when we fired nurses and teachers and health inspectors; how quickly they forget the damage associated with 26 million student-days of education lost at a time of growth in this economy and the world economy.

The world economy is being challenged like never before. We have responded—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you, Minister. Supplementary?



**Mr. Frank Klees:** We all understand the world circumstances that we find ourselves in. What I want the minister to do is to stand up and accept responsibility for the misspending of tax dollars while, in fact, we didn't have a world recession which put us behind the eight ball today—\$91 million he spent to fire nurses, \$90 million to close or consolidate community care access centres, and \$50 million, at least, in costs related to the Caledonia occupation that this government chose not to take action on.

There was a time in this province, while he was the Minister of Finance—we're not talking about the past; we're talking about \$27 billion of additional spending. My question to the minister is simply this: What did he do to prepare for these times, and will he admit that he has responsibility—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We did hire more nurses, sir; we did. We hired more teachers. We rehired environmental inspectors and meat inspectors, and the people of Ontario gave us a mandate to do that.

In addition, we've laid out now a number of budgets that have invested in infrastructure, that have invested in tax cuts. That member, for instance, voted against billions of dollars for innovation and retraining. He voted against property tax credits for senior citizens, not once, but twice.

1100

We have laid out a plan that has served us till now. On March 26, we look forward to hearing some details about how they will get into that balance, because what they're talking about now is gutting public services and raising taxes over the long term for the majority of our citizens.

## MANUFACTURING JOBS

**Mr. Paul Miller:** A question to the Premier: Thirty-two years ago, I followed in the footsteps of my grandfather, my father and my uncles and went to work at Stelco in Hamilton. It was a proud family tradition, one that spanned 300 years of service to the company. Yesterday, we heard the devastating news that the operations there are temporarily shutting down. For nearly a century, Stelco provided jobs that helped families in my community pay their mortgages, send their kids to college and buy their food. Not even, Premier, during the Great Depression did the plant shut down. Given the unprecedented nature of what has happened, when will the McGuinty government fast-track its infrastructure money—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I want to thank the honourable member for his question, for sharing that personal history with us, and for the genuine concern that he is expressing on behalf of his constituents and people who've been affected by this terrible circumstance.

I had the opportunity to meet this morning with the member for Hamilton Mountain and discuss these kinds of issues, hence the reason for my contacting Mayor Fred Eisenberger to talk a little bit more about this and how we might find some way to provide further support to that community. We now have in place an action centre to lend support to the steelworkers as they try to manage and struggle through this.

I am always interested in hearing from the opposition members and my own caucus with respect to what we might do to lend more support to these folks who are caught up in these kinds—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Back to the Premier: The shutdown is affecting people who worked hard each and every day just to try to get ahead. Our local economy is getting wiped out in Hamilton, and the McGuinty government still has no jobs plan to deal with the recession.

Ontario needs bold action to protect jobs and help our communities cope with the growing crisis that we're facing. A Buy Ontario plan, Premier, would help sustain jobs that exist now, stimulate the manufacturing sector, and ensure Ontario's continued leadership in the manufacturing sector.

If the McGuinty Liberals are serious about helping Hamiltonians, as the Premier just said, and protecting Ontario's manufacturing jobs, will they immediately implement a Buy Ontario plan for this province?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I appreciate the member's representation that she makes on behalf of her community, as well.

I think there are always good reasons for us to remain hopeful, and one of those includes a comment made by the representative of the Steelworkers: "The Steelworkers have been vocal in our call for domestic procurement policies"—and they have. "So including domestic content guidelines in the Green Energy Act is a decision in the right direction," said Ken Neumann, national director of the United Steelworkers union."

I'm not sure if it has been well noticed, but in our Green Energy Act, as part of the legislation, we're going to create the authority for ourselves, through regulation, to put in place specific requirements for these kinds of Buy Ontario/Buy Canadian policies. So we're open to suggestions with respect to what that number might look like, but I think it is some reason for some of the folks who are working in the steel industry to remain hopeful.

## EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

**Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis:** My question is for the Minister of Economic Development.

Minister, constituents in my riding are devastated over the news that US Steel is idling its Hamilton and Lake Erie plants and will be temporarily laying off 1,500 workers. US Steel Canada, previously Stelco, is a company with deep roots in Hamilton. Everyone in my community knows at least someone who works for US Steel



Canada, whether it is a family member, a friend or a neighbour. When I heard the news yesterday, I knew that I had to do everything I could to help the workers in my community.

Minister, what has the Ontario government done to help this company and what can you offer to the workers and the communities of Hamilton and Nanticoke, which have been rocked by this latest news? Also, what has the Ontario government done to help Hamilton weather this economic storm?

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** I appreciate the member's questions, and we've had discussions as well about this. No doubt, as the member says, we all want to work toward immediate assistance, as well as working with the company and the workers, to see what the future holds.

As has been mentioned, the company announced a temporary idling. We don't know what that means yet. I've spoken with company officials; I've spoken with Leo Gerard, the head of the Steelworkers union, as well. We're looking at ways in which we can deal immediately to assist those workers. It's a brutal time for them, not only in terms of the very difficult news, but also in terms of the uncertainty that comes with it.

The government has in the past worked with this company in Hamilton. We did come forward in 2006 and worked with Stelco in order to see a future for it, and we'll continue—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis:** This is no doubt devastating news for the workers and the families affected by yesterday's announcement. I have heard from many of my constituents and they simply do not know where to turn. Many workers who now find themselves without a job have never been in this situation before and don't even know where to start. People are scared and can't begin to imagine how they are going to tackle finding another job. Some of the workers at US Steel will be looking for training or education required to compete in today's workforce. For many, this is the only job that they've ever had.

Minister, can you tell me what services are available to these workers today?

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** I'll refer that supplementary to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

**Hon. John Milloy:** I thank the member for the question and obviously add my voice to all members of the Legislature who are very concerned with the situation in Hamilton. I want to assure the member and all members of the House that we're working with the union and the company to address this issue.

As was mentioned by the Premier, due to a previous layoff, we helped establish the Hamilton Area Steelworkers Action Centre. Right now we're in the process of formulating plans to expand services so that those affected by yesterday's layoffs can access adjustment services there. Certainly, all affected workers will have access to all our employment service programs, including Second Career. I also want to inform the House that

we're working with Service Canada to discuss an integrated and co-ordinated approach to making sure that all affected workers have access to both federal and provincial programming during this very difficult time.

### SMALL BUSINESS

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** My question is for the Minister of Small Business and Consumer Protection. On March 31, your government is forcing through, once again, an increase to the minimum wage. Barrhaven's BIA chair, Ken Ross, who also owns Ross' Your Independent Grocer in Barrhaven, told me they do not need another increase in the cost of doing business in the province of Ontario. This will compromise his ability and others' ability to address an hourly end rate for their full-time and part-time employees.

As the Minister of Small Business, why do you just sit there instead of breaking down barriers for Ontario's businesspeople? Why don't you defend the interests of the little guy like Ken Ross? Will you stand up against the job-killing schemes of other cabinet ministers?

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** Let me tell you, I am very proud of the contribution that small businesses make in this province. We have about 360,000 strong small businesses in Ontario, and they contribute \$250 billion worth of economic activity. Our government has worked very closely with small businesses to address some of the needs they currently have in the global recession they are facing.

I talked yesterday about what some of the challenges are in the manufacturing sector. Our government has worked very closely with them to develop programs, which are integrated in nature, so that we can assist them. Some of the programs are a Smart program that we run with the help of the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters Association that provides assistance to them to look at their processes, and also provides capital needs up to the extent of \$50,000 for special projects. Then, we also have—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

1110

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Fifty thousand dollars for special projects is not going to save this economy, Minister. Your government is creating roadblocks for job creation and retention instead of helping them. This government won't be happy until all the jobs in Ontario are gone, and more people are losing them. I'm telling you something: Not only is Ken Ross facing a higher minimum wage, and he's struggling; he's also going to have to grapple with a hydro bill which is currently \$30,000 a month but, because of your power grab and your energy act, is going to go up by 30%—close to \$12,000 more.

Will the minister responsible for small business do his job, stand up for the little guys and stand up to the Minister of Labour, the Minister of Energy and his Premier and tell them that enough is enough? Will their



policies change so that we won't be forcing more job losses at a time when we can't afford it?

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** Let me tell you what our government is doing. Our government is standing up for small businesses. What they are doing is just asking questions in this House. What we have done is actually met with small businesses and developed programs that will help them in the long haul.

I talked about the SMART program, but in addition to that, we are actually helping them with their training needs. We are going and meeting with these people. We have the AMIS program, which is targeted at companies if they want to spend capital expenditure. We have programs on the innovation side. We are helping them to position themselves in the global markets. We are not just talking; we are actually acting. All you're doing is asking questions in the House, and that has been your nature from day one here.

### HOME CARE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** My question is to the Premier. After months of study and review, last December the Minister of Health declared that he had solved the problems plaguing our home care system. He had brought in accountability and found the right balance; he had the solution. Today, just weeks later, thousands of women and men who provide home care services are on the verge of a strike that will affect 40,000 people who depend on them. Home care workers are ready to strike because the Liberal cut-throat bidding system has left many of them living in poverty. Is the Premier willing to admit that his minister has failed to address the crisis in home care, or does he consider this impending strike a success?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Health.

**Hon. David Caplan:** The member's characterization of a new quality-based selection system for home care services—I couldn't disagree more with the member opposite. I will say this: I want to thank the personal support workers who have come here to Queen's Park. I want you to know how much I and Ontarians appreciate the work you do on their behalf and the care you provide. The support that this government has provided in the home care sector, I would say, compares quite favourably to what we've seen in previous governments. In fact, since 2003, there has been almost a 50% increase.

I know that there are always difficult issues when it comes to bargaining. There is bargaining taking place between management and labour. The member also knows that it is not appropriate, as Minister of Health, to insert myself in the midst of that negotiation. I do hope that both sides will come together and—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Both sides have come together and they both agree, but the minister has to step in. Home care workers are critical to our home care system. They support people when they want to live in their own home.

Walter Van Hengstum provides home care in the Niagara region. He works a 10-hour day. For four hours of his shift, he travels from home to home, from client to client. He is paid for six hours because he's not paid for his travel time. He makes \$84 a day. That works out to \$8.40 an hour. That is less than minimum wage.

Does the minister plan to build our home care system by forcing health providers into poverty? When will the Premier and the minister bring in basic working standards for home care providers?

**Hon. David Caplan:** The facts are these: This member and her colleagues have voted against the personal support worker stabilization strategy, a \$30-million investment in the sector which has increased the base minimum wage for qualified personal support workers from \$9.65 an hour to \$12.50 an hour. This provided improved compensation for travel costs and for travel time. It has introduced service volume targets and training initiatives.

The fact of the matter is that since 2003, 220,000 more Ontarians are receiving home care services, and \$573 million, an almost 50% increase—47%—in funding availability of home care services has prevented more than a million visits to our hospital emergency rooms since 2003. Unfortunately, this member is stuck with her ideological blinkers on and cannot see the improvements in quality—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

### ABORIGINAL EDUCATION

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Minister, we know that aboriginal students face unique barriers to accessing a college or university education or training. For many students, continuing their education after high school is not viewed as an option due to the many barriers that they face. In most cases, this is because students simply do not have adequate information to make decisions about their future and do not have ample support both at home and in their communities.

It is imperative that we provide aboriginal students with improved resources so educators and staff can better support aboriginal learners and increase awareness about First Nations, Metis and Inuit cultures. We know that we have to do a better job of reaching out to these students. Their success and the success of this province depends on it.

Minister, how are you ensuring that aboriginal students have the information they need to ensure they are making the right choices about their post-secondary education?

**Hon. John Milloy:** I want to congratulate the member for his interest in aboriginal education and confirm to him and to this House our government's intention to work with those students from groups which are not well represented in our post-secondary education system, particularly aboriginal Ontarians.

Through our access to opportunities strategy, we are supporting counselling, tutoring, career planning and cul-



tural awareness services at our colleges, universities and aboriginal institutions. This year, Ontario is providing \$6 million in access funding to improve access so that more aboriginal students can graduate. We have invested a total of \$24.1 million for aboriginal post-secondary education and training; \$14.7 million was invested in aboriginal post-secondary education and \$9.4 million was invested in aboriginal training.

We remain committed to working with our aboriginal partners to ensure that they are fully participating in our—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Both Confederation College and Lakehead University in my community are working very hard to reach out to aboriginal students to encourage them to consider university, college or training. I know that they have been active in providing services to both potential and career students.

For instance, the Nanabijou project at Lakehead University is training teachers on how to effectively mentor aboriginal students. At Confederation College, our government provided funding to help the college hire an access adviser to help students navigate the college application system and process.

We know that institutions can't do it alone. They need the support of government to help them demonstrate to students that post-secondary education or training is the tool that is going to set them up for success later on in life. Minister, how are you supporting more projects such as the ones I have outlined?

**Hon. John Milloy:** I want to congratulate both institutions from the honourable member's community, which are doing an excellent job in terms of welcoming and supporting aboriginal students. Through last week's access announcement, Confederation College and Lakehead University will each receive \$250,000 to support tutoring and mentoring services for aboriginal students. This funding will help the institutions provide invaluable resources to students that will help them be successful in their studies.

I'm very proud of the work that my ministry is doing, along with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, in welcoming First Nations and Metis students into our post-secondary institutions and taking advantage of the opportunities that exist out there. The aboriginal community is one of the fastest-growing in our province, and we are going to continue to work to make sure that every young person from the aboriginal community can achieve their potential through post-secondary—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### DEADSTOCK INDUSTRY

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** My question is to the Minister of Agriculture. We've been getting a lot of calls in our office from farmers around the province, farmers like Billy Yates from Beaverton, Donna Geisberger from

Brock, Kelvin Kerr from Greenbush, and Andrea Steinlechner from Brockville, just to name a few. Madam Minister, because you cut funding to the deadstock operators with no warning, they tell me, and no plan, all these farmers have deadstock on the farm that they can't dispose of safely. What do you want me to tell those farmers they should do with this stock in this situation?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** I thank the honourable member for the question. For those of us in rural Ontario, the safe management of deadstock is a very important issue. We have been working with industry partners, I would say, since the event of BSE. We became aware that for the end product of deadstock, there was a very limited use for the product. Once, there was a much greater use. So we have been working with industry partners.

1120

What has happened in other provinces is that the deadstock is managed safely, on-farm, by way of composting, or there could be the establishment of a central composting facility, or it could be put into an anaerobic digester.

We recognize that we needed to update our regulation for on-farm management. Those regulations will be in place so that farmers can manage this by-product of their industry on-farm.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Minister, changes may be coming in the future, but there are dead animals on the farms today and no one is picking them up.

Minister, in 2006 you said that deadstock collectors were not financially viable without government assistance because of the restrictions introduced by BSE. You promised two years ago to come up with a plan to make the industry sustainable. Instead, you've simply cut off the funding, in spite of the fact that the deadstock operators said they would be forced to close.

In eastern Ontario, all the companies have stopped picking up deadstock as of the first of this month. You've created a dangerous situation, Madam Minister, for the farmers and deprived them of an essential service. How are you going to deal with this dire situation today, not two, three, four weeks later? Today, Madam Minister.

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** We have worked with industry partners on this. We have implemented regulations that have been posted on the EBR so everyone in the industry is aware of how they can manage deadstock on-farm.

I would say as well that when you look across Canada, this is the way, for the most part, that deadstock is handled in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Quebec; either that, or when there are collection services provided within the province, the owner of the deadstock pays the full cost of picking up those animals.

We did recognize that we had a responsibility, until regulations were in place, to support the collection of the product. However, we now have regulations that will enable the on-farm, safe management of deadstock, and that is where we believe the industry needs to be.



## SERVICES FOR DISABLED CHILDREN

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Teddy Patterson, in the Speaker's gallery, was born with cerebral palsy. With hard work and support, he's graduated from high school. He requires full-time, assisted care, yet, like so many families, the costs are devastating without government help.

Almost a year ago, you assured the Patterson family that they would receive the services they needed for Teddy to remain a part of his community. The Patterson family has received no new assistance. Why won't the minister keep her promise to Teddy Patterson?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Thank you for that question. I want to welcome Teddy, in the gallery today, and his parents. Thank you for being here. First of all, let me say thank you to the parents for all the service that you're providing to your son. It's very admirable, and I congratulate you.

Like many other parents here in Ontario, they have a disabled child and they take care of him. For these children, there's no place like home with the parents. That's why this government has invested in different programs—special services at home, the Passport program—to help people like Teddy to remain at home.

We are investing every year. It's a very successful program. In 2005, we started this Passport program, which has been very successful in helping people like Teddy stay at home with his parents.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** The minister's words are empty. Your Bill 77 hasn't increased access to developmental services as you claimed. It has entrenched the minister's approach to developmental services: flatlining funding and expanding waiting lists.

Especially in times of economic uncertainty, the correct response is not to stall resources to the most vulnerable, as the minister is doing. The Pattersons risk losing their home and risk the ability to be the loving and willing caregivers who have helped Teddy thrive, a struggle that so many other parents also face in Ontario every day. They have not seen any new funding, Madam Minister. When will you send new funding and help the Pattersons to look after Teddy?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I just want to correct the member from the third party—what she said—because this program was started in 2005. Since 2005, we have invested \$27 million in this program to help more than 2,000 individuals. This program and this service were not there when they were in power.

They can stand up today and say what we have not done. We know we need to do more; we know we need to invest more; we know that we need to help people like Teddy and his parents.

I just want to correct—I'll ask my colleague to verify the answer. I never said in the House that I will provide the money, because we want to be fair for everyone in need. We have evaluation tools so everyone is evaluated and the service is provided as they need it.

## HEALTH CARE

**Mr. David Oraziotti:** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Like all members of this House, I've been working hard in my riding to find ways to increase access to primary care for constituents. We have a new hospital under construction, new investments in medical equipment and increased supports for seniors to stay in their homes, but Sault Ste. Marie, like many other cities, is an aging community with an increasing need for health services.

While our government has also significantly increased the number of medical training spaces, it takes years to educate a primary health care provider, and I know that some residents in my riding continue to look for a doctor or nurse practitioner. That is why I was pleased that the Premier made a recent announcement which will help ensure that orphan patients in my community are able to access a primary health care provider.

Minister, can you tell the House about the health care supports that are being added in my community to help residents get the care that they need?

**Hon. David Caplan:** I'd like to thank the member from Sault Ste. Marie for not only the question but for his advocacy in support of nurse practitioners.

I had the great pleasure to join the Premier just a couple of weeks ago at the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario's office to announce that we are moving forward and making good on our commitment to add 25 nurse practitioner-led clinics in Ontario. NP-led clinics are locally driven, primary health care delivery organizations which will include registered nurses, family physicians and a range of health care professionals who are committed to working together collaboratively. The first three of these new clinics will put down roots in Belle River, Sault Ste. Marie and Thunder Bay.

We're building on the success of our first nurse-practitioner-led clinic, which opened in Sudbury in 2007. Today, the Sudbury clinic provides family health care to approximately 2,000 patients.

We're moving ahead on the next round of nurse-practitioner-led clinics this spring. I'm proud that our province is able to capitalize on the unique and valuable skills—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. David Oraziotti:** I want to thank the minister for his support for the nurse practitioner clinic in our community, and I also want to congratulate the successful bid team from Sault College, which, over the next few months, we will work with to ensure that they have the resources they need to help patients in my community.

The new clinic will include nurse practitioners, on-site physicians, consultative physicians and other health care professionals, who could include pharmacists, dietitians and social workers. I know that our government is committed to increasing access to health care in this province, and I'm sure my constituents will benefit from the clinic when it's up and running.



However, given that these clinics will not be immediately operational, there is concern about what constituents can do to access care in the meantime. Minister, can you tell Ontarians what they can do to ensure that they get access to primary health care more quickly?

**Hon. David Caplan:** Ontarians have a number of avenues that they can explore when they're trying to find care. Most recently, I had the pleasure to launch Health Care Connect, a new program, a partnership with the Ontario Medical Association, to help people find a family health care provider by dialing a special 1-800 number. Ontarians will be able to tell a Telehealth staff member that they are looking for a family doctor. A nurse known as a health care connector will then try to match that unattached patient with family health care providers who are accepting patients.

We've also launched a new website; it's called Your Health Care Options. It's an online tool that uses Google-style mapping to help people understand the different resources for health care available to them in their community. I think it's an innovative way to help Ontarians find the health care they need when they need it.

We're always looking at ways to increase access to health care and to reduce wait times. That's why we're adding these 25 nurse-practitioner-led clinics and an additional 50 family health teams. Combined—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

1130

## TOURISM

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I have a question for the Minister of Tourism.

Minister, it has come to my attention that the school year may begin one week earlier than usual to accommodate the number of in-school instruction days. However, this would mean that many tourism operators across Ontario would be adversely impacted by the shortened summer season, through loss of revenue.

As an example, I've heard from the manager of Santa's Village, Jamie Hopkins.

He writes: "That one week of a shortened summer will effectively reduce our operating season by 10%. Our margins would not be able to absorb such a significant swing in operating days."

He says, "Our labour force is also primarily students, representing 95% of our staff complement."

Minister, are you willing to make sure that tourism operators who are dependent on the summer months for their livelihood are protected by pushing back the start of the school year to the Tuesday after Labour Day?

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** This is an appropriate question for the Minister of Education.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'm very pleased to be able to address this issue because, like the member opposite, I think it is one of real concern.

I understand that locally there are different circumstances that need to be accommodated. In a community

where tourism is a huge issue, like Muskoka, obviously this is of great concern. I do have some of the e-mails that have gone to the member opposite—one from the Lumina Resort—so I'm very aware of the issue that he's dealing with.

The situation is this: If a school board decides to start the school year before August 31, then the Minister of Education has to weigh in on whether that's appropriate or not. None of those decisions have been made. There have been some boards that have asked for that consideration. The vast majority of boards will be starting their school year after August 31, into September—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Thank you, Minister, for that answer. And to the Minister of Tourism, I would think there are some tourism consequences in the riding of Nipissing as well.

I'm certainly hearing from many, many different operators in Parry Sound–Muskoka. The tourism operators are quite concerned about this, and it is significant. The example I just gave you, Santa's Village: It operates mainly in the summer. That's 10% of their whole season. That's all their profit gone, basically. So this is very serious.

I've heard from other people, like Betty Bacon and Sue Watson, owners of the Craft Room in the village of Rosseau. They write, "We strongly oppose this action as we own a small retail store ... and do 50% of our whole year's business from the time the school year ends...."

I've got many other examples.

So I think you recognize it is a very serious question. I hope you'll use whatever powers you have, if the board decides to start before the end of the school year, to make sure it doesn't start till after Tuesday.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Again, I absolutely take this concern very seriously, and in fact the Minister of Tourism has raised it with me a number of times. I'm very aware and very concerned about it.

The fact is, the last time this situation pertained, in terms of the calendar, was 1998, and at that time the authority to make those decisions was left at the local level, except for when there was a request to start before August 31. That situation is exactly the same now. These decisions have not been made.

When I look at the correspondence with the member opposite, my hope is that he and the tourism operators are speaking with the school board. It's very important that the school board be very aware of the implications of their actions. I will certainly do everything I can to support the industry and the province, but the school board and the community need to be—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

## MINISTER'S COMMENTS

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: During question period, I distinctly heard the Minister of Finance suggest that you were biased when you asked



him to sit down. Most of our members heard it too. I know that the Minister of Finance sees himself as a parliamentarian. He'll want to withdraw that comment and perhaps apologize to the Chair.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, I do wish to apologize to the Chair. It was uncalled for.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

#### BIRTH OF MEMBER'S GRANDCHILD

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask your indulgence to make a brief announcement. Yesterday at Victoria Hospital in London, my daughter Paula and her husband, Kyle, became the proud parents of an eight-pound, seven-ounce granddaughter for Lynn and me. She will be a cousin to MacKenzie Fessey of Mississauga.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** On behalf of the Legislature, congratulations to you and your family.

There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1135 to 1500.*

#### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

##### DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** It's my pleasure to be here today in the Legislature to discuss a very important issue in my constituency of Nepean—Carleton.

As I've said a number of times in this esteemed chamber, Barrhaven in south Nepean in the great city of Ottawa is one of the fastest-growing communities not just in Ontario but in all of Canada, with one of the strongest and fastest-growing birth rates.

But it brings me to some challenges a fast-growing community faces. Among them, we know that it's difficult to make sure that we've got the infrastructure we need, and right now we need the Strandherd-Armstrong bridge to be built to link two very important communities.

We also have health care challenges. One of those challenges in particular is ensuring that we have an X-ray clinic to look after one of the fastest-growing populations in this entire province. Last year, unfortunately, the X-ray clinic in Barrhaven was taken away from our community, and what we're asking for is to send it back. My constituent Perra Wharton is going to be leading a petition campaign to this Legislature to ensure that we have the adequate health care resources we need.

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I see the former government House leader, the current Minister of Transportation, mocking this side of the House when we discuss the challenges for our communities, particularly those which were farmers' fields just 10 years ago and do not have the

adequate resources in place today to deal with the growing populations. So I might add, to him and to the other members in the government, that just because we are asking for resources in our community does not mean that you should shut them down.

#### PARENTS REACHING OUT

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** Before I begin, I would like to recognize Evene Pedoven and Danny Lopes from my constituency office, who are here today.

I rise in this House today to speak about community involvement in education. Our government has encouraged parents to take on active roles in the activities of schools through the Parents Reaching Out program. In my own riding of York South—Weston, seven schools will receive funding for setting up local events designed to foster an open dialogue between parents and teachers in order to improve the overall educational experience of students.

After all, schools are more than just buildings with desks and books. What makes a school a thriving educational institution is the community involvement that underpins a child's academic development. To name a few examples of how we are supporting parent-teacher engagement: St. John the Evangelist Separate School will conduct numeracy workshops to get students talking about the importance of math. Frank Oke Secondary School will stage an event titled ArtConnect, where parents will learn how to get their youth involved in the visual and performing arts. Finally, Maple Leaf Public School will hold parenting workshops designed to offer advice to parents on how to generate an interest in at-home learning for their kids, among other things.

I very much look forward to working with the schools in my area to continue with the programs and ensure that the constructive dialogue between parents and teachers carries on.

#### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** In answers to questions today, the Premier and the Minister of Finance repeatedly referred to measures that the government took in the last budget that our party does not support.

They know full well that this House only gets to vote on the budget in its entirety. This means that you can either vote in favour of the whole budget or against the whole budget. Claiming we oppose every measure because we vote against the budget is disingenuous. Taken to its ultimate extent, voting against the budget means you oppose every single cent of government spending. This is obviously absurd.

So I have a proposal for the Premier. Why don't you let the House vote on each line item in the budget? That way, members of all parties could say yes or no to specific provisions one by one. At the end of the process, you can then have a single vote on the entire budget. Only this final vote would have to be a confidence vote.

If you have the courage to give this House a vote on every line item, then do so. Otherwise, don't pretend we oppose every action of government because we vote against the budget.

### SKILLS TRAINING

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** Last week in my riding of London-Fanshawe I visited, alongside with my colleague Minister Bentley and Minister Matthews, the training centre run by the Labourers' International Union of North America, Local 1059. This centre is recognized as one of the leading training facilities of its kind in North America. LIUNA was celebrating a great achievement known as the training trust fund. Through this fund, they are investing \$1,074,000 in equipment and infrastructure at their training facility.

LIUNA Local 1059 represents 1,600 workers and has agreements with over 240 construction companies in London and the surrounding area. Under the leadership of Jim MacKinnon and his team, they have provided training to many professional labourers in their state-of-the-art facility. It's a remarkable place that provides both classroom and practical areas for students and apprentices. The training and education they offer is among the best Ontario has to offer, and I'm proud they are located in my riding of London-Fanshawe.

The LIUNA training trust fund is one of many achievements accomplished by Local 1059. Over the last 12 years, LIUNA's training programs have grown steadily, and even in our current economic downturn they are still in demand. I would like to thank the members of Local 1059 for their efforts to ensure that their apprentices and the construction trades receive the finest training.

### LA COMMUNAUTÉ D'ORLÉANS

**M. Phil McNeely:** C'est pour moi un grand honneur d'annoncer aux membres de l'Assemblée que St-Joseph d'Orléans, fondée en 1860, célébrera son 150<sup>e</sup> anniversaire en 2010.

Orléans fut un des premiers villages canadiens-français à l'est de Bytown. Pendant ces 150 ans, Orléans a su conserver son caractère francophone, et la paroisse St-Joseph est la plus grande paroisse du diocèse d'Ottawa.

Bien que les premières habitations furent construites sur la rive de la rivière des Outaouais, le village s'est développé le long du chemin de Montréal, plus précisément le long de la première concession.

Les célébrations s'étaleront tout au long de l'année 2010 et incluront des activités telles que des expositions d'art, le lancement d'un livre, une exposition d'objets patrimoniaux, du théâtre au nouveau Centre des arts Shenkman, une croisée de canots à l'île Petrie, la confection d'un DVD par les élèves de l'école secondaire Garneau, et j'en passe.

Je suis fier d'être le député d'une si belle communauté. J'accorde tout mon appui au comité organisateur et je lui souhaite le plus éclatant des succès : Peter Schonenbach, président, M<sup>me</sup> Colette Côté, vice-présidente, et M<sup>me</sup> Denise Lemire, agente de projets.

### ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** In yesterday's question period, I asked the Premier to explain why he hadn't made a serious effort to pay down the provincial debt when he had the chance, when the economy was strong. I asked him why Liberal members refused to support my 2003 motion calling for a long-term debt repayment plan. The Premier declined to answer, which is not entirely surprising. Unfortunately this government, through its negligence and neglect, has done as much damage to the economy as it has done to Ontario's balance sheet.

In May 2005, I tabled a resolution calling for an immediate investigation into Ontario's industrial and economic competitiveness in order to develop an action plan to maintain and expand our domestic and international markets. Of course the McGuinty government chose to ignore this constructive idea as well.

Now, it's almost four years later and more than 272,000 people have lost their factory jobs, but this government still has yet to produce an effective action plan to restore Ontario as the leader in Confederation.

In Hamilton, 1,500 steelworkers will soon lose their jobs. It's devastating news for that city and the neighbouring communities, including Puslinch township in Wellington-Halton Hills.

We all know that this economy is a global problem, but that's no excuse for this government's shameful record of inaction when times were good. Had they rolled up their sleeves and acted on the debt, had they acted on the need for an industrial action plan, had they taken our advice, Ontario would be in a far stronger position to weather the economic storm we're experiencing at the present time.

1510

### TOWNSHIP OF WOOLWICH

**Ms. Leeanna Pendergast:** I want take an opportunity to one more time to talk about Woolwich township, in my riding of Kitchener-Conestoga, and our bid to become Hockeyville. We are the last community in Ontario to become Hockeyville, and I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has been so supportive, who has really worked hard to go online, phone or text in order to make Woolwich Hockeyville.

Woolwich is the home of Dan Snyder, a former NHL hockey player. I was Dan's vice-principal at Elmira District Secondary School. We tragically lost Dan Snyder in an accident with Dan Heatley. So we ask that Ontario continue to do it for Dan as well. Originally, voting was



to end at midnight tonight, but now it's 1:30 in the morning; it's been extended for an hour and a half.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the committee that has worked tirelessly to make this happen for Woolwich township. I want to thank Graham Snyder and LuAnn Snyder, Jay Church, Del Gingrich, Larry Farr, Deb Good, Sharon Schultz, Sherrie Goss, Brenda Boland, Sandy Mann, Linda Fauteux, David Brenneman, Carole Fife, Robert Lariviere, Val Martin and Sandy Shantz.

I also want to thank the mayor of Woolwich township, Bill Strauss, for his incredible commitment to this project, as well as Premier McGuinty for his support for Team Ontario, and everyone in this House who has spent the last three days texting, going online, phoning and doing everything they can, and everyone at home. Please continue to do so until 1:30 a.m. tomorrow.

### STEEL INDUSTRY

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Hamilton and the Lake Erie Works, under the corporation US Steel, are shutting their operations in Canada. We're talking about thousands and thousands of jobs.

My family has a history of almost 300 years working at Stelco. The Steel Company of Canada operated during the Great Depression. My father worked two days one week and three days the next. He shared his workload with his mate so that families could keep working and wouldn't starve.

Stelco didn't close shop and run away. It stayed the course. It supported its customers and its employees.

In these new global economic times, governments must finally take the lead as the crisis continues to emerge. If we don't get our act together and don't work seriously now to get this economy rolling, the devastation will be complete.

We must move this infrastructure money into the steel sector, the construction sector and other sectors now to get our economy back on track and rolling.

### STEEL INDUSTRY

**Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis:** My community of Hamilton was shocked yesterday by the sudden temporary closure of the US Steel plant. This plant has been a fixture in our community for the last 100 years.

Our steelworkers in both Hamilton and Nanticoke are among the best in the world, and we are proud of the strong tradition they have built.

This closure is a reflection of the global economic recession that has idled steel plants across the United States, including Michigan, Illinois and Minnesota.

I want the affected workers to know that they are not alone. As a government, we will help them navigate through these challenging times.

We have received assurances from US Steel that they will fulfill their employee responsibilities outlined in

their collective agreement, and we will work hard to make sure that this happens.

We also established the Hamilton Area Steelworkers Action centre in response to previous layoffs. Plans are under way to expand services that provide affected workers with the skills necessary to succeed in this economy.

We are proud of our steelworkers, and we will continue to work hard to help those affected. As a government and a community, we must and will continue to work toward a bright future for our great city of Hamilton and for all Hamiltonians.

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Mr. Lalonde assumes ballot item number 20 and Mr. Hoy assumes ballot item number 58 on the list drawn January 28, 2009.

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### TOBACCO DAMAGES AND HEALTH CARE COSTS RECOVERY ACT, 2009

#### LOI DE 2009 SUR LE RECOUVREMENT DU MONTANT DES DOMMAGES ET DU COÛT DES SOINS DE SANTÉ IMPUTABLES AU TABAC

Mr. Bentley moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 155, An Act to permit the Province to recover damages and health care costs incurred because of tobacco related diseases and to make a complementary amendment to the Limitations Act, 2002 / Projet de loi 155, Loi autorisant la province à recouvrer le montant des dommages et du coût des soins de santé engagés en raison des maladies liées au tabac et à apporter une modification complémentaire à la Loi de 2002 sur la prescription des actions.

*Interruption.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I would just remind our guests that we welcome your attendance here, but as much as you may wish, you're not allowed to participate in the debate.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The minister for a short statement.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** During ministerial statements, please.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### TOBACCO-RELATED HEALTH CARE COSTS

#### COÛTS DES SOINS DE SANTÉ RELIÉS AU TABAC

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** As I rise today to speak to the legislation just introduced, I want to acknowledge the presence in the gallery of a number of different people who have been supportive, instrumental, in so many ways:

Michael Perley, executive director, Ontario Campaign for Action on Tobacco; Bill Thomas, president of the Heart and Stroke Foundation; Nadia Yee, government relations, Heart and Stroke Foundation; Gar Mahood, executive director of the Non-Smokers' Rights Association; Irene Gallagher Jones, senior manager of public issues, Canadian Cancer Society; Meridene Haynes, director of programming, Asthma Society of Canada; Dr. Terrence Sullivan, president, Cancer Care Ontario; Dr. George Pasut, vice-president, prevention and screening, Cancer Care Ontario; Connie Uetrecht, executive director, Ontario Public Health Association; Joanne Di Nardo, manager of government relations, Ontario Lung Association; Ratsamy Pathammavong, tobacco control manager, Ontario Lung Association; and also, to acknowledge in their absence, the Ontario Medical Association.

I'm pleased to rise in the House today to introduce this legislation that would, if passed, enable our government to take action to recover health care costs associated with tobacco use, costs that have long been a drain on the health care system and a burden on Ontario taxpayers.

Smoking is the number one cause of premature death and illness in our province. Tobacco use accounts for the death of approximately 13,000 Ontarians every year. That's 36 deaths every day.

I don't think I need to convince my fellow members of the staggering human costs associated with tobacco use. The friends and families of those 13,000 Ontarians who die every year from tobacco-related diseases can tell you about their loss, their grief and the hardships they suffer. There are thousands more whose loved ones are stricken with painful and debilitating tobacco-related illnesses. That's why the McGuinty government is a national leader in tobacco control initiatives, through our smoke-free Ontario strategy, a vital part of our government's commitment to a healthier Ontario.

Toutefois, la loi que nous présentons aujourd'hui s'écarte du modèle suivi par nos initiatives passées, bien qu'elle soit aussi importante. Le coût financier du tabagisme est tout aussi exorbitant que le coût humain du tabagisme.

Today's legislation takes a different step from our past initiatives, but it is also important. The human cost of smoking is immense, but so too is the financial cost. In

financial terms, the health care costs associated with smoking are more than \$1.6 billion every year in this province, with almost 500,000 hospital days every year. This is a huge drain on our health care system. Let me put that in perspective: \$1.6 billion would provide funding for 2,000 MRI units—not 2,000 MRIs; 2,000 MRI units—operating eight hours a day, every single day. It would fund 211,000 hip and knee surgeries, and it would also provide funding for eight large community hospitals the size of Toronto East General Hospital.

1520

Notre projet de loi traite des coûts monétaires des soins de santé liés au tabagisme. Si la loi est adoptée, elle nous autorisera à tenir les fabricants de produits du tabac responsables en recouvrant les coûts des soins de santé engagés pour traiter des maladies causées par la consommation de tabac.

The proposed legislation deals with monetary costs for health-care-related smoking. This legislation would, if passed, allow us to hold tobacco companies accountable by recovering health care costs spent to treat tobacco-related illnesses. It would allow us to directly sue tobacco companies to address their alleged misconduct. It would give the government a two-year window to seek redress from the tobacco companies for the drain on our health care system on behalf of all taxpayers. Under this proposed legislation, the government would be able to sue for damages alleged to have been caused by a tobacco-related wrong, whether it is current or happened in the past. It would, if passed, create a method to determine the health care cost damages due to tobacco-related illness that have drained our health care system and have been borne by our taxpayers, and it would allow for the recovery of past and ongoing tobacco-related damages. The liability would be divided among tobacco companies based on their market share. Further, our legislation would establish the burden of proof required to link tobacco-related illness to the harm caused by tobacco products and damages owed by tobacco companies.

If our legislation passes, Ontario would join British Columbia and New Brunswick, which are already pursuing lawsuits against tobacco companies to recover health care costs. Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan and Manitoba have also passed health care recovery legislation. I ask everyone in this House to support this proposed legislation so that we can work together to seek redress from tobacco companies. We want to work toward recovering the financial cost borne by taxpayers and our health care system as a result of the alleged wrongdoing of tobacco companies.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Responses?

### TOBACCO-RELATED HEALTH CARE COSTS

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I am pleased to respond, on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus, to the Attorney General's statement on proposed tobacco damages and health care cost recovery legislation. We are aware that there is a growing trend in Canada to enact



legislation to permit governments to recover damages associated with tobacco-related costs and damages, and that similar legislation has been enacted already in a number of Canadian provinces, including British Columbia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and Manitoba.

We in the Conservative caucus agree with the principle behind the legislation, because there is no question that the economic cost associated with tobacco use to our health care system is staggering, not to mention the terrible human costs that are associated with it. We certainly do support the premise behind the legislation and it was something that we, when we were in government, tried to address as well.

The only question that we would have right now is whether this should be a priority for the government in dealing with the enactment of the smoke-free Ontario strategy. It's a question of whether this is a cost-effective type of recovery. Let's look at some of the other things that could have been done. In human terms, why not work towards ensuring that the smoke-free Ontario strategy is evenly applied across the province of Ontario? Let's look at recovering the hundreds of millions of dollars in lost tax revenue arising out of the sale of illegal cigarettes in Ontario, including in illegal smoke shacks in many of our communities. Why not crack down on that and get those revenues that could be applied to offset some of our health care costs? We should be doing that, and we implore the government to get busy with that, quite frankly.

But what I would say with respect to this piece of legislation is that it sounds very good—it sounds good to be able to go after the big tobacco companies and try to recover those costs from them, but you have to commence a lawsuit. Lawsuits take years and, I would suggest, hundreds of millions of dollars for what type of recovery you might be able to achieve in the end.

I would suggest that while the principle behind the legislation is laudable, why doesn't the government look at real ways of being seriously able to get revenues in quickly, with a sure means of recovery, rather than going after lawsuits that may or may not have a chance for success?

I would ask the government to address some of these other priorities as well as pursuing the strategies that are contained within this piece of legislation.

#### TOBACCO-RELATED HEALTH CARE COSTS

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I'm pleased to respond to this ministerial statement on behalf of New Democrats here at Queen's Park. France Gélinas, our health critic, was aware that this legislation was coming forward this afternoon, and she wanted me to make sure that I expressed her endorsement of the proposition.

It's simply incredible that a deadly and addictive product could be sold and marketed, yet the manufacturers deny any responsibility for the deadly impact of their product.

Oh, and I know the hoopla, the silliness, that comes from mostly the US tobacco lobby, but echoed here in Canada, about tobacco manufacturers not telling people how many cigarettes a day to smoke—"Why, gosh, if people only smoked two or three cigarettes a day, the risks of cancer would be limited." But the whole idea of luring people into a smoking habit is to get them smoking one, two and three packs a day. If every smoker only smoked two or three cigarettes a day, the tobacco companies would go bankrupt. The whole idea is to get people hooked.

I don't want to sound too sanctimonious. I was a long-time smoker, a heavily addicted smoker, and spent a lot of time breaking the habit. I'm quite pleased that I was finally able to get that monkey off my back.

What I find remarkable is this: Our generation, we grey-hairs, are less inclined to smoke, yet smoking amongst young people has not been arrested or halted in the same manner that it has amongst their parents. That is a shocking observation, and the tobacco industry knows it. The tobacco industry has to find new generations of markets to stay in business. They have to cultivate more smokers. They've had incredible power, and they've used it.

Successive federal government after government has tried to impose limits on, let's say, advertising or endorsements by tobacco companies at sporting events or billboard advertising. Those same successive governments, talking big games, have similarly been aggressively addressed by the tobacco lobby and have always inevitably backed off.

I believe in tort. I'm not a fan of the government's misuse, from time to time, of Bay Street lawyers, but I tell you that in this instance, this is exactly what tort law and the courts are designed to address. This isn't something that should be resolved by dispute resolution in a private mediation. This industry has to be exposed as a murderous industry. It has to be made accountable. They murder people, Attorney General. The tobacco industry murders people, and I, for one, wish that our criminal laws would make it possible for us to prosecute these same purveyors of death criminally, because manslaughter or homicide, a murder is a murder is a murder, and they do it knowingly.

I look forward to being able to address this bill on second reading. I can tell the government that we expect that it will be called promptly. We expect that it might have some brief committee hearings for some commentary by interested parties, and I suspect that it then would be referred back to the House for third reading. If—and I've read the bill very quickly here during the five minutes of the Attorney General's comments and my colleague's—there are what we believe are flaws in the bill, we're going to speak to them. If the interested parties believe that there are things that can be improved, they'll tell us about that and we'll speak to those too.

1530

But this is, as I say, deadly serious. I condemn that industry in the most forceful terms. I say that we have to create a culture where people don't regard the tobacco



industry as one that's in any way, shape or—as a matter of fact, just this morning in the New York Times I read the obituary of the Marlboro man in the United States, who was put into smoke-filled movie studios and camera studios for the publicity shots and contracted cancer and sued the cigarette companies that he was doing the advertising for. This utilization of the courts is in my view a most appropriate one, and one that New Democrats support, endorse and look forward to seeing it proceed promptly.

#### INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I believe we have unanimous consent that up to five minutes be allotted to each party to speak in commemoration of International Women's Day.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed? Agreed.  
Minister of Children and Youth Services.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** It's International Women's Week, seven days of activities and events that culminate this Sunday, March 8, on International Women's Day. I'm pleased to rise in this House today to celebrate the accomplishments of women in Ontario and around the world.

It's a time to celebrate the political, economic and social achievements of women, both past and present, and it's also a time to reflect on the work that still needs to be done for all women to achieve full equality in all aspects of their lives.

This year's national theme is "Strong Leadership. Strong Women. Strong World: Equality." Our communities need to see strong women in leadership roles: women who are making a difference, women who act as role models for our young people. Women have made great strides in acting as role models in boardrooms, community centres, academia and politics. But we need to do more.

I'm very proud to serve as an elected official in my community. I am delighted and encouraged every time a young girl asks me about my job here at Queen's Park. What I tell her is this: "You can do it, too." And we all need to work hard to ensure that she can.

We need to continue our work in levelling the playing field. Equality can come only when there is opportunity for all, regardless of gender. We know there's still much to do. We know there is injustice when there is a gender wage gap. We know there is inequality when women continue to live with the threat of violence. Our government is making systemic changes to break down barriers and create opportunity. Through our domestic violence action plan, we've been working closely with women's advocates and community leaders across Ontario. We've created in partnership with them innovative programs aimed at increasing public awareness of woman abuse and improving supports to victims.

Our Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign, a component of our domestic violence action plan, is now internationally respected and is in over 140 communities

across Ontario, and we've launched similar campaigns in francophone and aboriginal communities. This campaign recognizes that creation of a strong world calls on the leadership of all of us—communities, neighbours, friends and families.

Our goal is to ensure that all women gain hope and opportunity that they can live safe, rewarding and productive lives, and that they can participate in and contribute to their communities as strong women.

We celebrate role models. This year over 70 women were nominated by their MPPs for the Leading Girls, Building Communities and the Leading Women, Building Communities awards. These women are wonderful examples of people in our local communities who are doing the important work of helping other women and young girls be the best they can be.

I would like to close with a challenge to all of us this House, and in fact to all Ontarians. All of us have women in our lives who have made us who we are—women who have inspired us to do better, to speak out or to advocate for change. I challenge all of us, women and men, girls and boys, on International Women's Day: Let's celebrate these women. I'm asking you to take a moment to send a letter to a woman who has inspired you by making a difference in your life, a woman who has touched your life in a special way and inspired you to make a difference, too. It could be a teacher, a parent or someone you see as a strong leader and mentor.

During International Women's Day and Week, we reconnect to promoting the rights of women, ending violence, increasing economic security and helping all women to achieve the full equality we all deserve. I ask all of us to take the time to thank a woman for the lasting contribution she's made to the community and our world.

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I'm pleased to rise today on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus in recognition of International Women's Day 2009. Canada's theme this year is "Strong Leadership. Strong Women. Strong World: Equality."

International Women's Day is a day to celebrate the accomplishments of women and to reflect upon the progress that women have made in our province, our country and the world, as individuals and collectively. It's a day to recognize the sacrifices made and stands taken by women to afford the women of future generations the rights which so many of us take for granted in the year 2009. It's also a day, however, to consider steps that can be taken to further create an inclusive and non-discriminatory environment for our daughters to grow up in.

This year the theme for International Women's Day reflects the view that by increasing women's involvement in leadership roles, we can ensure that women across our great country are given the opportunity to reach their full potential and to play a part in shaping and improving the future of our province and our country. A release by the federal government in recognition of International Women's Day 2009 notes, "For Canadians, equality means women and men sharing in the responsibilities and



obligations, as well as in the opportunities and rewards, of life and work. In Canada, leadership is key across society—from the private sector, to governments, to the general public—for people of all origins, generations and backgrounds to participate fully in our country's economic, social and democratic life, and ultimately, in improving the state of the world.”

I'm proud to sit in the Legislature as the representative from my community and in a province which is a leader in promoting women's rights. I'm proud to be a member of a party which has had the honour of being represented by many strong women. The Progressive Conservatives have an impressive record both in Ontario and across the country with respect to advancing the status of women. In 1918, Conservative Prime Minister Robert Borden ensured that women were given equal status and the right to vote. In 1972, provincial Premier and PC leader Bill Davis appointed Margaret Birch as Ontario's first woman cabinet minister, as minister responsible for youth. The PC Party of Ontario in 1985 named Bette Stephenson as the first female Treasurer and Deputy Premier. Our party also played host to the first female Minister of Finance to introduce a budget in Ontario, Janet Ecker, former MPP for Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge. I'm sure that I need not mention that our first female Prime Minister was delegated from within the Conservative Party: Ms. Kim Campbell.

While the leaders I have just spoken of are public figures, it's also important to acknowledge strong women in leadership roles across our province in other professions: our female teachers, for example, who go to work every day to arm our sons and daughters with the knowledge and confidence that one day they will grow up to make a big difference in society; our nurses, doctors, and other health care practitioners, who quietly work to improve the lives of others, often without thanks; our volunteers, who wholeheartedly and without any request for compensation are making huge differences in people's lives every day.

I would be remiss, however, if I were to fail to acknowledge that our work in gaining equality for women is not complete. For example, Statistics Canada reported in 2006 that the women in our workforce are still earning only 71% of what their male counterparts make. Women also continue to be underrepresented in some areas of traditional male employment.

All of this, however, is overshadowed when contrasted with the treatment of women in some developing countries. Many women are denied access to what are considered in Ontario as basic human rights, including access to education, health care or even food. Many women are unable to vote and are looked down upon for independent thinking and for aspiring to be more than a servant to their husband. Further to this, in some areas, women are often abused, raped and tortured by men in their lives without any legal repercussions.

1540

So today, on International Women's Day, let us join together in thanks and recognition of our strong female leaders who are the inspiration for our communities and

our world. Let us also vow to take a stand against unfair treatment within our communities and to lead by example in hopes that one day, women across the world will be recognized as persons, leaders and equals.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's a pleasure and a privilege to stand in this House, which still sees a minority of women in its seats, and speak again about International Women's Day. You know, for 40 years I have been taking part in International Women's Day celebrations. But I have to tell you that International Women's Day is not Mother's Day. International Women's Day was originally a protest march about the inequality of women, and we are still protesting the inequality of women.

Back in 1969, I think, when I took part in my first protest march for International Women's Day, the banners we carried said, “Control of Our Bodies, Control of Our Lives.” We still are struggling for control of our lives. We've made some progress on control of our bodies in those 40 years, but not so much on control of our lives.

So I thought I would really focus on ways we could help our minister across the way to make the lives of women better. Here are some suggestions, and these are the same suggestions we were making 40 years ago.

First, back then the cry was for universal, 24-hour-a-day, free child care. We're no closer to that than we were 40 years ago. In fact, we're further away from that than we were 40 years ago. Right now in Ontario, only one in 10 children has a daycare spot. The average cost is over \$1,000. Next door to us, in Quebec, you can get child care for \$7 a day. Why not here? So there is a huge, huge demand.

Second, we need a minimum wage that puts women above the poverty line, because women are two thirds of minimum wage earners and women, predominantly, are the poor in this province. That means \$10.25 an hour and it means now; not tomorrow, not next year, not in 2011—now.

What else do we need? We need housing. We need housing for women. We need housing for women escaping abuse. We need transitional housing. The Redwood shelter, in my riding, is always full. They never have beds. We need beds for women escaping abuse.

Most importantly—and it has been touched on by the previous speakers—we need economic equality. There is no equality without economic equality. Wherever a woman makes 71 cents on the dollar, which is what they do in Ontario, you do not have equality. We don't have women experiencing equality in the province of Ontario. That's the reality.

Now, 20 years ago, we had pay equity legislation put in place in this province. But if you don't fund the folk who enforce it, which we haven't been, then it doesn't happen. So we're still dealing with that issue as well, and you heard my colleague talk about the 71 cents on the dollar.

Coming up on March 24 is Agnes Macphail Day. Now, there's a woman to celebrate. I rub her shoulder every time I walk up the steps of the grand staircase. We should all get five minutes to speak about good old Agnes. She was a woman with guts and a woman who



stood on principle. She was a woman who talked about the economic equality of women being necessary for full equality. Agnes said that without economic equality, there's no equality whatsoever.

I haven't actually often thought of Yogi Berra as a feminist, but his quote, "It's like déjà vu all over again," came to mind today. It is like déjà vu all over again. Every year we celebrate another International Women's Day, and we celebrate the women in our lives, as we should, but Lord sakes, how many more decades will it take before I can stand here and answer that kid that was me in that first demonstration 40 years ago and say, "Do you know what? Finally, we have control of our bodies, and finally—finally—we have control of our lives"? Will it be another 40 years? I hope not.

## PETITIONS

### IDENTITY THEFT

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I have a petition that reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there is a reported epidemic of fraudulent loans involving notarized affidavits by/from loan-handling lawyers' affiants that claim debts will be carried by other people's creditworthiness and/or equity in property; and

"Whereas banks, financial institutions and lending houses claim innocence in that they rely on third parties to perform potential debtors' identity validation and financial due diligence in cases of loans and mortgages they approve on the basis of third party representations; and

"Whereas it is perfectly legal for banks to readily approve loans they consider financially risk-free using third party affidavits that make debtors of people who are completely unaware, uninvolved and never see the money; and

"Whereas, by way of example, people have signed their support to reopen a quashed OSC investigation;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That an investigation concerning identity theft be conducted into banks', financial institutions' and lending houses' lending policies, practices and procedures (as per reopening OSC file number 20050316-17043) to identify weaknesses in the law and lending system procedures for appropriate amendments to the law to strengthen specific areas of responsibility for potential debtors' identity validation and financial due diligence that will safeguard people's wealth and equity in property from fraudulent loan applications, specifically in cases of third party representations using notarized affidavits by/for loan-handling lawyers that may benefit themselves and/or their affiants."

I present this petition to the House and affix my signature thereto.

### MULTIPLE MYELOMA

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Health Canada has approved the use of Revlimid for patients with multiple myeloma, an incurable form of cancer; and

"Whereas Revlimid is a vital new treatment that must be accessible to all patients in Ontario for this life-threatening cancer of the blood cells; and

"Whereas multiple myeloma is treatable with the proper therapies, thereby giving hope to the 2,000 Canadians" annually diagnosed with this disease;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Immediately provide Revlimid as a choice to patients with multiple myeloma and their health care providers in Ontario through public funding."

### PROTECTION OF MINORS

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** I have a petition provided to me by the Christopher Champlain Community Centre. It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there is no law in Ontario prohibiting pornography and other sexually explicit material from being viewed on computers in public schools and libraries; and

"Whereas there are public schools and public libraries that do not use Internet filtering software on computers that blocks such inappropriate material; and

"Whereas parents in the province of Ontario have the right to ensure their children are protected from pornography and other inappropriate material available on the Internet in their public schools and libraries;

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all public schools and libraries in Ontario be required to install Internet filtering software on computers to avoid screening of sites with inappropriate, explicit sexual content."

As I agree with the petition, I affix my name thereto.

### MULTIPLE MYELOMA

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I have a petition that reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Health Canada has approved the use of Revlimid for patients with multiple myeloma, an incurable form of cancer; and

"Whereas Revlimid is a vital new treatment that must be accessible to all patients in Ontario for this life-threatening cancer of the blood cells; and

"Whereas multiple myeloma is treatable with the proper therapies, thereby giving hope to the 2,000 Canadians diagnosed annually;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly ... as follows:



"Immediately provide Revlimid as a choice to patients with multiple myeloma and their health care providers in Ontario through public funding."

I am in agreement and would sign my name thereto.

1550

### CHILD CUSTODY

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** I'm pleased to introduce this petition into the House, and I want to thank Alexander for his efforts in gathering these petitions.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the people of Ontario, deserve and have the right to request an amendment to the Children's Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their parents and grandparents, as requested in Bill 33.

"Whereas subsection 20(2.1) requires parents and others with custody of children to refrain from unreasonably placing obstacles to personal relations between the children and their grandparents; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2) contains a list of matters that a court must consider when determining the best interests of a child. The bill amends that subsection to include a specific reference to the importance of maintaining emotional ties between children and grandparents; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2.1) requires a court that is considering custody of or access to a child to give effect to the principle that a child should have as much contact with each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2.2) requires a court that is considering custody of a child to take into consideration each applicant's willingness to facilitate as much contact between the child and each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child;

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Children's Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their parents and grandparents."

I'm pleased and proud to sign my signature in support of this petition.

### DIABETES TREATMENT

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** I have a petition provided to me by Dr. Robert De Miglio. It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas elementary school-aged children in the province of Ontario suffering from diabetes require regular blood sugar monitoring and may also require insulin and glucagon to manage their disease; and

"Whereas there is no medical or nursing assistance readily available in schools as there was in the past; and

"Whereas the parents/guardians of these children must currently visit their child's school several times throughout the day in order to test their child's blood sugar levels; and

"Whereas the absence of medical support in our elementary schools results in substantial stress and disruption to the lives of children and their working parents;

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"(1) That elementary schools in the province of Ontario have on-site staff trained in the daily monitoring of blood sugar levels of children who suffer from diabetes; and

"(2) That the trained staff also administer insulin and glucagon when required, with the consent of the child's parent/guardian."

As I agree and support this petition, I affix my name thereto.

### INTERPROVINCIAL BRIDGE

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas:

"(1) ROCHE-NCE, a consulting firm hired to study potential sites for an interprovincial crossing between Ottawa and Gatineau, is recommending that an interprovincial bridge across the Ottawa River be built at Kettle Island, connecting to the scenic Aviation Parkway in Ottawa, turning it into a four-lane commuter and truck route passing through downtown residential communities; and

"(2) Along the proposed route are homes, seniors' apartments, schools, parks, the Montfort Long Term Care Facility and the Montfort Hospital, all of which would be severely impacted by noise, vibration and disease-causing air pollution; and

"(3) A truck and commuter route through neighbourhoods is a safety issue because of the increased risk to pedestrians and cyclists and the transport of hazardous materials; and

"(4) There are other, more suitable corridors further east, outside of the downtown core, which would have minimal impact on Ottawa residents;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To reject the recommendation of a bridge at Kettle Island and to select a more suitable corridor to proceed to phase two of the interprovincial crossings environmental assessment study."

I agree with this petition, affix my signature and send it to the table via page Danielle.

### MULTIPLE MYELOMA

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Health Canada has approved the use of Revlimid for patients with multiple myeloma, an incurable form of cancer; and

"Whereas Revlimid is a vital new treatment that must be accessible to all patients in Ontario for this life-threatening cancer of the blood cells; and

"Whereas multiple myeloma is treatable with the proper therapies, thereby giving hope to the 2,000 Canadians diagnosed annually;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Immediately provide Revlimid as a choice for patients with multiple myeloma and their health care providers in Ontario through public funding."

I agree with this petition and affix my signature to it.

### CHILD CUSTODY

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I have a petition signed by a number of constituents from the riding of Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry, and it reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the people of Ontario, deserve and have the right to request an amendment to the Children's Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their parents and grandparents.

"Whereas subsection 20(2.1) requires parents and others with custody of children to refrain from unreasonably placing obstacles to personal relations between the children and their grandparents; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2) contains a list of matters that a court must consider when determining the best interests of a child. The bill amends that subsection to include a specific reference to the importance of maintaining emotional ties between children and grandparents; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2.1) requires a court that is considering custody of or access to a child to give effect to the principle that a child should have as much contact with each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2.2) requires a court that is considering custody of a child to take into consideration each applicant's willingness to facilitate as much contact between the child and each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child;

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Children's Law Reform Act as above to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their parents and grandparents."

As I agree with this petition, I shall sign it and send it to the clerks' table.

### DIABETES TREATMENT

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas elementary school-aged children in the province of Ontario suffering from diabetes require regular blood sugar monitoring and may also require insulin and glucagon to manage their disease; and

"Whereas there is no medical or nursing assistance readily available in schools as there was in the past; and

"Whereas the parents/guardians of these children must currently visit their child's school several times

throughout the day in order to test their child's blood sugar levels; and

"Whereas the absence of medical support in our elementary schools results in substantial stress and disruption to the lives of children and their working parents;

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"(1) That elementary schools in the province of Ontario have on-site staff trained in the daily monitoring of blood sugar levels of children who suffer from diabetes; and

"(2) That the trained staff also administer insulin and glucagon when required, with the consent of the child's parent/guardian."

As I'm in agreement with this, I've affixed my signature.

### LUPUS

**Mr. Kim Craiton:** I'm extremely pleased to submit this petition on behalf of the Lupus Foundation of Ontario, which is located in Ridgeway, a part of my riding.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas systemic lupus erythematosus is under-recognized as a global health problem by the public, health professionals and governments, driving the need for greater awareness; and

"Whereas medical research on lupus and efforts to develop safer and more effective therapies for the disease are underfunded in comparison with diseases of comparable magnitude and severity; and

"Whereas no new safe and effective drugs for lupus have been introduced in more than 40 years. Current drugs for lupus are very toxic and can cause other life-threatening health problems that can be worse than the primary disease;

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to assist financially with media campaigns to bring about knowledge of systemic lupus erythematosus and the signs and symptoms of this disease to all citizens of Ontario.

"We further petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to provide funding for research currently being undertaken in lupus clinics throughout Ontario."

I'm proud to sign my signature in support of this petition.

1600

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### POVERTY REDUCTION ACT, 2009

#### LOI DE 2009 SUR LA RÉDUCTION DE LA PAUVRETÉ

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 3, 2009, on the motion for second reading Bill 152, An Act respecting a long-term strategy to reduce poverty in



Ontario / Projet de loi 152, Loi concernant une stratégie à long terme de réduction de la pauvreté en Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** In a normal debate I would start by saying that I was pleased to join in the debate on Bill 152, the Poverty Reduction Act. Unfortunately, this is not a normal debate. Bill 152 is one of the most empty, most meaningless and most superficial bills introduced by this Liberal government. I would summarize it as a bill that requires the government to write a strategy and to write annual reports. No actual action or improvements to the lives of Ontario's poor are contained in the bill. What this bill really demonstrates is this government's reliance on "gesture politics." Instead of taking action that would help to reduce poverty such as improving education or cutting red tape so the economy can create jobs, the government aims to show that it cares, that it is on the right side of a political issue. It would rather get a good headline in a paper than do things that are needed.

The New York Times, in 2005, published an excellent article called "The Triumph of Gesture Politics." The article provides an excellent definition of the term: "The expression 'gesture politics' generally describes the substitution of symbols and empty promises for policy." This government has repeatedly demonstrated that gesture politics is their modus operandi.

Last year's Lake Simcoe Protection Act is a perfect example. Instead of spending money to clean up the lake, they passed a bill to set up committees and write reports. The status-of-the-artist act is another great example. All it did was declare a commemorative day for artists. In no way did it match the substantial list that many artists and their unions expected out of the government's 2003 election promise to them. All of these bills were gestures by the government, completely empty gestures.

So let's talk a look at the bill itself. The actual clauses of the bill take up less than two and a half pages—two and a half pages to fight poverty in Ontario. Now, to be fair, if you add in the preamble, you can get to an entire three pages.

The preamble of the bill trumpets the government's publishing of a paper on poverty reduction last December. They state their goal of achieving a 25% reduction in child poverty in five years; a worthy goal, although just as with this bill, it is only words on paper. No actual commitment of resources has come out of this December paper.

I also find the five-year commitment very interesting because it has taken the government five years to actually produce a paper on poverty reduction, five years in which it could have been taking action. The bill's preamble says:

"A principal goal of the government's strategy published on December 4, 2008, is to achieve a 25% reduction in the number of Ontario children living in poverty within five years. The initial focus of the government's strategy is on breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty by improving opportunities for children, particularly through the education system."

This leaves me with one question: Does the government not realize that pulling children out of poverty requires the government to help pull their parents out of poverty? Better education for a child who is five or 10 years old is a good thing, but is it going to help pull any of them out of poverty in five years? If the government cannot get this fact right, why should we trust anything else they are planning to do?

Let's move on to the rest of the two-and-a-half-page bill. Section 1 of the bill is the purpose: "to establish mechanisms to support a sustained long-term reduction of poverty." I have no problem with that.

Section 2 is where the empty gestures begin. The government is required to keep the current strategy or write a new one. The strategy must be based on a shopping list of nice principles: the importance of all Ontarians, the importance of communities, diversity, the importance of involvement, respect, co-operation. All the government seems to have left out of their two-and-a-half-page bill is a commitment to peace, friendship and everything nice. I do not object to any of these sentiments, but as they are written into this bill, they are meaningless. They are only gestures. The bill then moves beyond the nice sentiments to the contents of the strategy. It requires a poverty reduction target. It states that there should be initiatives and indicators.

Section 3 requires a new strategy every five years and a new target.

Section 4 requires an annual report starting at the end of 2009, in which the minister will tell us all how well she is doing in fighting poverty. Does anyone here expect that the report the minister writes about her own ministry will say anything negative? Imagine if the Auditor General's report were written by the Minister of Finance.

Section 5 states that the minister shall consult with a list of stakeholders whenever she feels like consulting with them, whenever she considers it advisable to meet with them.

Section 6 gets us back to the paper-writing thrust of the government's antipoverty strategy. The minister, after five years, must review the strategy, tell the public she is reviewing the strategy and consult those people she feels like consulting.

Section 7 requires the government to put its strategy and reports on a government website. That's it for the bill.

Let me restate what I think of this bill: It is gesture politics. The government believes it is more important for the media and the public to see it on the right side of an issue than actually to take action. I think that the minister and the government should be ashamed to have introduced such a meaningless bill in this House. Not a single person will be pulled out of poverty by this bill. The only beneficiary of its report-writing provision is the paper industry.

What penalties does the bill contain for governments that fail to meet their targets? The answer: There are none. Members will remember that Mike Harris passed legislation to penalize ministers who didn't meet their



budgetary commitments. The Liberal government repealed the legislation. Bill 152 contains no penalties for anything. The only accountability the government assigns is in the annual reports, and the minister will be writing the annual reports, reporting on herself and her officials.

The bill lets the government set any targets it wants for poverty reduction. They can then report back on whether or not they are meeting their own targets. Then the bill requires them to revise their strategy after five years, well after the next election. A better title for this bill would be the Reducing Poverty by Writing a Report Every Year and Sticking It on a Shelf Act.

1610

If you want a real review of success, then at least amend the bill to send the annual report to a committee of the Legislature for review. You will still have the votes to pass it, but at least a committee can hold hearings, ask questions and hold you to account.

The sad thing is that everyone knows that poverty is a problem. Thousands of people are trapped in poverty in Ontario, most of them through no fault of their own. This bill is a betrayal of those who need help. It is wrong to offer false help to those who need a hand up. Liberal members should be ashamed that they have chosen gesture politics over real help.

I have to admit that I feel some sympathy for the minister. I am quite certain that she legitimately wants to help bring people out of poverty. I suspect that some clever staffer in the Premier's office has calculated that the government needs a good headline on poverty. They think that only a good gesture is needed.

So, let's talk about what needs to be done.

We all recognize that poverty is a problem in Ontario, and the economic downturn is only going to make poverty worse, increasing social problems throughout Ontario.

Just a couple of weeks ago, I pointed out to the minister in this House that the economic downturn is affecting the demand for children's mental health services. Since 2006, Windsor has lost thousands of manufacturing jobs, with unemployment soaring above 10%. Children's mental health cases in Windsor and Essex have increased 50% with that economic downturn, with the auto downturn. We can expect to see similar increases in many health- and social service-related fields.

The Welland Tribune reported recently that children's aid society caseloads usually increase up to 45% within six to 12 months after plant closures and massive job losses. We can only speculate when we hear about Hamilton and the area surrounding Hamilton, with the steel company closures—but these are real people and real issues.

These types of problems that hit in a downturn are experienced by those in poverty all the time. We all know that poverty makes social problems worse—another reason that this meaningless bill is such a mistake and an outrage. It's time for action instead of gesture politics from the government.

We know the problems. The experts have already studied this and told us where the problems are.

The Institute for Competitiveness and Prosperity identified the specific groups most at risk for poverty in a paper it issued in September 2007 entitled *Prosperity, Inequality, and Poverty*. Through their research, they identified six high-risk groups who might find themselves in poverty. They include: high school dropouts; recent immigrants—those from the last 10 years; lone parents, usually mothers; the disabled; individuals between 45 and 64 who are living alone; and the sixth group, aboriginals. Government needs to take action to meet the needs of people in each of these groups. There is no one-size-fits-all solution.

Here are some of the principles that I think should guide the government in taking action.

Poverty reduction cannot be just an income issue. We must tackle the underlying causes, particularly education. The easy way would be to dramatically raise welfare rates, but this just discourages people from looking for work and creates a greater dependency.

Mike Harris and the PC government understood this and reduced the welfare rates to more reasonable levels. What was the result? According to Statistics Canada, the number of low-income Ontarians declined from 1,869,000 to 1,611,000 between 1995 and 2000. This means that there were 257,535 fewer people with low incomes under the first five years of the PC government. The percentage decrease went from 17% to 14%, an overall decrease of almost 19%.

I do not imagine that the minister was aware of this statistic when she said yesterday that no one was holding out much hope that the PC government of the day, 10 years ago, was going to act on poverty reduction. An almost 19% drop seems like a lot of hope to me. Also important in that was that, over a period of a couple of years of budgets, 750,000 Ontarians were dropped from the provincial income tax rolls, which meant an immediate increase of money in the pockets of those most vulnerable.

Our PC government recognized that the best way to cut poverty was to let the private sector create jobs, that the best way to get children out of poverty was for their parents to get jobs. The current government has lost sight of these facts. Good jobs end poverty in almost every case. It is the role of government to help people build the skills to get good jobs.

We should design government programs to match the needs of individuals in the six high-risk groups. Here's an example: Let's make sure a single mom gets quick access to the justice system, so she can get the child support she is entitled to, so she can afford to go back to work.

Let's make student assistance more flexible; universities and colleges should meet the needs of students of every age, not the other way around.

We should not see issues such as housing and income support as ends in themselves but tools to help individuals raise themselves out of poverty. They need to be effective, but they should also be there as short-term, temporary help in most cases.



The working poor and the disabled Ontarians who can work should not face the loss of medical and other benefits if they find full- or part-time work, and disabled people who cannot work should see their benefits increased regularly. Programs should be run as partnerships between an individual and the government, specifically tailored to deal with the reason or reasons the individual finds himself in poverty. As much as we can describe the poorest members of a group, we should always remember that we are dealing with individuals and families. Each is an individual case to be treated with respect and dignity.

This bill does none of those things. It will not bring a single person out of poverty. It is meaningless and an insult to poor people who are looking to us for leadership and help. It reminds me of an anecdote about Winston Churchill after he sent a copy of one of his books to a relative uninterested in reading. The relation told Churchill that he would simply put the book on the shelf with all the others. This bill will only produce reports that the minister will put on the shelf with all the others. Ontario's poor deserve much more.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

1620

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I'll be speaking to this bill in, oh, I suppose, around 10 minutes' time.

I listened, of course, as I always do, very carefully to the Conservative member, the critic for this area, Mrs. Munro, from York-Simcoe. I listened carefully to her concerns about the effectiveness of this legislation. I share those concerns; New Democrats share those. I don't share her passion and fondness for the Harris years. We have a very different—we look at the Harris years through a very different lens. But I understand that's an ideological difference.

This is a very, very serious matter, and increasingly so as every day more working women and men in this province lose their jobs, and as increasingly it gets harder and harder for those people to find replacement jobs even at a fraction of the salary of the job that they had stolen from them.

One of the things we're concerned about in this legislation is that it addresses children's poverty—fine, good, of course—but what about seniors or a person with disabilities? What about single moms who were so busy raising kids that they didn't acquire career backgrounds and are left working at a hotel in Niagara Falls cleaning rooms from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. and then go to the shift at the 7-Eleven, working for the lowest of wages in each instance? What about workers in certain workplaces? Child care workers, by the very virtue of being child care workers, tend also to be very poor: caring for your children, one of the most important jobs in our society.

I'm looking forward to the chance to speak to this bill in my own right.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** Certainly I too listened very carefully to the member from York-Simcoe and her comments on Bill 152.

She talks about gesture politics. I think it's very clear that this bill has a very concrete plan for how we will address poverty in the future. What this bill does is, first of all, state that we are going to move forward with our own plan as a government in terms of the strategy 25 in five years, but it also sets out very clearly that future governments are expected to do their part as well. They are going to have to come forward with their own strategies, and every five years they are going to have to make sure that they address that issue, if not sooner.

This bill is intended to make sure that future governments don't simply ignore the problem when it becomes convenient for them to do so or it's at their will. This is to clearly set out principles that will make sure that we have poverty reduction strategies in this province for future governments as well as our own. The principles talk about things like how the strategies should have very specific targets. It talks about initiatives that need to be developed to improve the economic and social conditions of the poor. It talks about indicators that would be linked to the determinants of poverty that would be used to measure the success of that strategy.

So the accountability is built into this, and who will hold us accountable? I think primarily the poor. The poor will come forward and say to us, as government and as future governments, either, "Your strategy is working," or it's not. I think they're the ones who will be the test for this. That is the accountability piece in all of this.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** I congratulate the member from Simcoe, who spoke eloquently on the subject and is very knowledgeable. She has worked in this area for some time, and her record is enviable in dealing with poverty and trying to solve those problems.

I think we would all agree that as far as the working-age population is concerned, a job is the best cure for poverty, and this government has done precious little in its five years in order to enhance the jobs that are available in this province.

As far as our seniors are concerned, I've heard it said that it's not a good thing, it's not a comfortable life, to be poor in this province, and it's not a very comfortable life to be old, but to be poor and old is the worst of all possible worlds.

This bill will do nothing, absolutely nothing, for the seniors in our society who are in such desperate need of some help, either in their living arrangements, their accommodations, or their needs for health care and their needs to be looked after in their so-called golden years. Whenever I mention golden years to a senior group, there's always one response: They're not so golden. The aches and pains that go along with age, of which I am beginning to develop a few myself, lead me to believe that perhaps that's good advice and that any government should be looking at enhancing the lot in life of our seniors. This bill will do nothing in that particular area.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?



**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I'm pleased to speak to Bill 152, the Poverty Reduction Act. I was speaking to someone this weekend on the whole thing about reading skills, which are so important and such a big indicator of what the opportunities for kids are. Reading skill at the end of grade 3 is a reasonable predictor of a student's future academic success. Education has to be tied in very carefully and very closely, and it has been in this act.

This chap has a company called BrainsInAction. They look at the brains of our kids, and his feeling is that this concentration on reading skills is of utmost importance. We must have spent over an hour together, him telling me that if we're going to be successful on poverty reduction education—and this has come out of the act. This is what we have been seeing here.

I do recall with my own kids at home how important it was. They grew up in French-language schools and total immersion. I was the only one at home who spoke French, so I would be reading with them and helping them out with reading skills. You could see how their achievement at school changed a great deal if I, as a parent, had the time. I was in business, and I didn't have enough time to really give this important feature. As I look back on that—my wife is an avid reader, and she had certainly helped them in the English language—it's so important, that parent attention.

I think we have to look at the education system. We have to make sure that we are giving our kids the right education so that they have opportunities.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for York—Simcoe has two minutes to reply.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** Thanks to the members from Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, Halton and Ottawa—Orléans for their comments.

One of the comments made by the member for Lambton—Kent—Middlesex was the question of accountability in this bill. That is the whole issue. There is no process within the bill, in fact, to have it as a public document, which is why I made the reference to it going to a committee or something like that as part of a public process, to be able to look at it with greater scrutiny.

The question that the member from Ottawa—Orléans raised about reading skills: I couldn't agree with him more, but that's not what the bill is about. It has only issues around writing strategies and setting those kinds of things on an annual basis.

I think that the member from Welland and I would agree that what we're looking for is far more specific and certainly a higher degree of accountability and that if one wants to have a piece of legislation based on the poverty reduction plan, it falls short of the kind of accountability that we would be looking for. More importantly, we're looking for actual action being taken. Whether it's under the guise of an economic plan or it's under the heading of poverty reduction, the point is still the same. We have many, many people in this province who are seeing themselves and their future becoming dimmer and dimmer. It's our job to create that hope.

1630

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Our critic on poverty issues is, of course, Michael Prue from Beaches—East York. Amongst other things he, along with Peter Tabuns, Andrea Horwath and Gilles Bisson, is running for leader of the NDP at the convention this weekend down in Hamilton, at the Hamilton Convention Centre. He can't do his lead this afternoon. The government is accommodating him by letting us stand down his lead until tomorrow morning at 9:05 or 9:10 or so, when he'll speak more fully to this matter than I'm allowed to; I have only 20 minutes this afternoon. So I'm grateful to the government.

What it does mean, however, is that the government might have to adjourn a little earlier than 6 o'clock. And because they're accommodating Mr. Prue, I promise not to taunt the government with the traditional cry of "Liberals don't want to work"—but this is a one-off. I promise not to taunt the Liberals with cries of "Liberals don't want to work" for adjourning early, and I won't. I will not do that.

This issue becomes more and more critical as our economy worsens and more and more people lose their jobs, because more and more people are falling into incredible poverty. One of the concerns that we have—look, child poverty is a very important matter. The bill seems to restrict the government's focus to only children, and we know that there are a whole lot of poor people out there who suffer equally.

I know that a whole lot of people watch the Legislative Assembly in the afternoon. When I'm back in Welland or Port Colborne or Thorold or Wainfleet, I hear from them, especially seniors. A lot of seniors are inclined to watch the legislative channel because they're tired of the soap operas. They just have no interest in the Hollywood entertainment celebrity gossip things. Paris Hilton means nothing to them. They're engaged in the political process. They use the legislative channel.

I know that Kathy Pendergast down in Kitchener—Waterloo, who is a delightful woman—I'm not going to tell you how old she is, but she is retirement age. But she's still certainly hale and hearty, and she watches, obviously eager to see the occasions when her daughter Leanna Pendergast rises and gets an opportunity to speak to any number of issues. I want to tell Kathy Pendergast that I'm grateful for her patience with us. I suspect that her thumb twitches occasionally on the clicker, but then she stops and says, "No, I'm going to spend five more minutes watching the legislative channel."

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** What kind of rates are they paying on cable?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I acknowledge that if Ms. Pendergast is getting cable service and getting her legislative channel, I'm sure she's annoyed from time to time by the outages and by the difficulty she has in reaching the cable company to make a complaint or have a service call. I'm sure she's frustrated from time to time by the bad picture. I assure her that Jim Bradley and I are



committed to major reform, especially when it comes to customer service of those industries.

I'm going to get to the bill in just a second, Speaker.

As a matter of fact, I was down—oh, how many months ago was it?—at the London convention where John Tory received his confirmation. He had 66%. I listened to his speech, and he talked about running government the way companies run, like Rogers, for instance. And I went, "Holy moly. Do you know the same Rogers I know?" Because all I know is that at Rogers, which is where I have to get my television from at the apartment here in Toronto, customer service is a dirty word. You want to reach for the phone and grab somebody and throttle them.

To be fair, at least when you call Rogers, you're at least likely to get a call centre in Canada, if not in Ontario. Bell Sympatico: I take great delight in asking the people—of course, I've waited on the phone for hours, because that's where I get my computer, right? You wait for hours, get cut off a couple of times and then you get to ask how the weather is in northern or southern India or in the Caribbean or wherever else it is. Bell Sympatico doesn't even use Canadian call centres.

I don't begrudge those people jobs, but when I order service from Bell, I think I'm getting something typically Canadian. Ms. Pendergast knows that. Bell is Canada. People like her would buy Bell stock if they had the means, knowing they could trust it, that they could rely on it. Some of them even bought Nortel, and they got ripped off badly, didn't they?

Look, down where I come from, just like everywhere else in the province, poverty is a very serious issue; it's a deadly issue. People die because they're poor; they do. There's just no two ways about it.

I visit the missions. I visit the soup kitchens—the Port Cares soup kitchen down in Port Colborne. I visit the Open Arms Mission down on Fifth Street, the old boxing club. I know Jerry Vanderklok. I go through their storerooms. The Open Arms Mission, down on Fifth Street in Welland, is getting 40 to 50 new families as clients every month—in Welland. That's smaller-town Ontario, population 49,000, give or take. An increase of 40 to 50 families a month—and I tell you, that larder is as often as not bare. They also run a small shop, called Redeemed Goods, over on Crowland Avenue, where they provide some modest employment for people who are having difficulty getting back into an employment mode, if you will, people who have had real, serious difficulties. They resell goods and sell new goods, especially things like clothing and some furniture.

The Hope Centre, down on East Main Street, with its residence on Division Street—again, increased load after increased load, and always struggling.

Joe Barkovich is an editor and columnist for the Welland Tribune, and an active member of the anti-poverty movement, the Out of the Cold movement and the church soup kitchen movement he's affiliated with at St. Kevin's church on Niagara Street. Joe Barkovich has written very articulately about the huge numbers of

people who arrive at St. Kevin's for their twice-weekly food bank.

Children are poor, and that's a tragedy. Although I acknowledge that this legislation has some appeal to some anti-poverty activists—I don't deny them their support for the legislation; that's up to them. But I say this bill does nothing in substantive means and substantive terms to address its goals. It says that the government shall report, and it will use a website, but it doesn't discuss any of the means by which it's going to achieve those goals.

Do you want to address child poverty? Make sure there's a child care placement for every child in this province. If Quebec can do it at, oh, \$6 a day, then we sure as hell can do it for \$6 a day in Ontario—the single most valuable tool, I put to you, to address children's poverty.

I don't have to repeat all the data. Everybody here is intimately familiar with it, I'm sure. The sooner children get into child care, the sooner they can have the issues that they have, whether it's health issues—you'll remember that I talked about the Niagara Peninsula Children's Centre a couple of weeks ago, at least a week ago. The sooner there can be intervention with things like hearing problems or speech problems—speech therapy—and they develop and acquire skills that give them the capacity to stay in school longer, the less likely they are to drop out before they get their senior matriculation, I think it's called—I'm showing my age. Child care.

Minimum wage, minimum wage, minimum wage. New Democrats say it's time for the minimum wage to be \$10.25 an hour. Don't forget that while this government tells minimum wage workers to wait—they already waited 12 years, from the point of 1995 through to 12 years hence. When the Tories didn't increase minimum wage one penny, was the business community in here lobbying, saying, "Well, I think we should give the workers a modest minimum wage increase so they at least keep up with inflation, with the cost of living"? No, they weren't. These workers have subsidized small business for that long; now it's time for small business to step up to the plate.

1640

And I want to make this clear: Most bona fide small businesses are family-run businesses—and I acknowledge they're important in our society. They're mom-and-pop operations.

All this silliness of the Martin-Florida report—\$2 million-plus for these guys to be brought here in a dog-and-pony show. And for Martin, I think it was, who said, "Wouldn't it be wonderful if the workers who lose their jobs"—I suppose like the ones at Stelco in Hamilton yesterday or the ones up in Sudbury at Inco or the ones at John Deere. He said, "Wouldn't it lovely if we could have training programs? We could help these people set up art galleries and beauty salons." He actually said that. This high-priced help, this high-priced consultant, paid \$2 million-plus for the glossy-paged report, actually showed glee at the prospect of workers who lose their



jobs opening up a beauty salon or an art gallery. Good grief. And they said, "Or maybe they can learn how to become tax form preparers and work for H&R Block." Nobody's going to be paying income tax pretty soon. Nobody's got a job. You don't pay income tax if you don't make money, do you?—the silliness of it.

Seniors are, all too often, poor. They're impoverished by the assault on their savings that's occurred over the course of the gouging—Enron, Madoff. I suppose it all started with Conrad Black when he raided that pension fund.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Where is he these days?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Conrad Black is doing easy time. How many people get to go to jail in Florida? Think about it. The National Post still buys his column. He's as disgusting a thief as one could ever find. He raided the pension plan of workers, pocketed the money. We didn't have the gumption to put him in jail for that. It took the Americans to throw him in the slammer for several years, where he belongs. I just hope he has a cellmate who's the meanest, toughest, biggest-bicepped, earringed, tattooed, mean guy who ever existed. I wish that on Conrad Black—a little bit of companionship.

Seniors are poor. Seniors are poor because they raise their children; they help raise their grandchildren. They've invested small amounts of money.

Look, where I come from, we've got some families down there in Welland, where they worked during the 1950s and 1960s—and to save \$50,000 was a big amount of money. It really was. It was a lot of money. Their bank manager said, "Oh no, don't put it in a savings account. We've got these new things called mutual funds. Don't worry; the stock market never fails. Capitalism has this resilience." Well, I know capitalism has this resilience, but what's happening now is capitalism at its very finest. I say to folks down where I come from, "Capitalism: How do you like it so far? Has free trade been good to you, too?"

There are still wealthy folks. The data tells us that there's more and more wealth being created, but it's concentrated in fewer and fewer hands, while the working middle class is all but disappearing, the working middle class who, in that post-Second World War era, built hospitals, schools, churches, factories and homes, and worked hard to save money, and sent their kids to college and university—the first generation in those families' histories to have kids go to college and university.

We know that seniors are poor because this government hasn't uploaded the download, and property taxes keep rising, and seniors who have paid for their homes are increasingly finding it unaffordable to live in them.

I've made this comment before and I think the observation is valid again: When I was a kid, people used to talk about not living long enough. Now, sadly, I talk to folks, whether it's in my constituency office or down at the Hungarian Presbyterian Church, where I was on Sunday afternoon past with Rev. Lallouet and her congregation as they did their spring lunch—cabbage rolls, chicken soup with csiga noodles, roast chicken, mashed

potatoes. Good thing I had to get in the truck and get to Toronto, because the dessert was inevitably one of those cream pastries with the powdered sugar on top that Hungarians love.

The folks that I talked to there are increasingly concerned not about living long enough but living too long—isn't that a tragedy?—because they're not sure that their resources will carry them through to their final days. They can't afford the taxes on their modest homes because, oh, well, politicians give themselves raises every year, from time to time spend an extra week here, giving themselves—oh, jacking it up by 30%, as we did a couple of years ago. You talk to these same seniors—the indignation that they're getting a three-cent increase in their social security cheque. You can't talk about poverty unless you talk about addressing the needs of seniors. We need to make it more affordable for them to live in their own homes, and now this government's promising them more and more expensive electricity—the most expensive in the world.

People with disabilities are poor. We don't have any employment equity regime in this province. That was dismantled in 1995, when Mike Harris was elected. It was a very modest one. Being disabled almost inevitably means being poor. When I talk to people who identify themselves as disabled and their advocates, I point out that "access" doesn't mean getting a ramp to the back door; "access" means access to every part of a society: to the economic part, to fair and decent housing, to the recreational part, to the social part; not just a ramp, a makeshift ramp so they can go in through the back door.

Minimum wage, child care, support for seniors—we can't talk about poverty unless we talk about restoring the cuts that were made to social assistance rates by the Harris Tories. I don't relish those days: a 22% cut—twenty-one point something per cent, to be fair—in social assistance rates, like that. Meanwhile, this government can talk about the modest increases it has given social assistance recipients over the recent few years; they still haven't caught up to where they were before the 21%-plus was cut from them back in 1995-96. These people are poorer than they've ever been. So this isn't about a sort of moist-eyed staring off into the horizon and wishful thinking.

Affordable housing: Unless this government supports the development of affordable housing—I'm talking about not the private sector subsidizing private and for-profit landlords; I'm talking about social housing. We had a strong social housing movement in this province. Down where I come from, in the Niagara Peninsula, it's Niagara Peninsula Homes. As a matter of fact, Andrea Horwath, in her early years, worked as an organizer for Niagara Peninsula Homes. She helped organize co-ops; that's what she did. She brought people together. She worked with them so they could build their homes together and run them together and with mutual respect. Co-op housing has all but disappeared from the surface of the Ontario landscape. If you want to talk about poverty, you've got to talk about affordable housing, and



this bill doesn't talk about affordable housing, just like it doesn't talk about increasing social assistance rates, just like it doesn't talk about increasing ODSP disability rates, just like it doesn't talk about increasing the minimum wage.

If you want to talk about addressing poverty, you've got to address another class of people who are very poor in our society, and that's post-secondary students, who have to pay more and more tuition for fewer and fewer teachers and who now find themselves—we have food banks on university campuses here in Ontario, not some Third World country. These are bright young people who are, in increasing numbers, dropping out of post-secondary education because they simply can't handle the debt load or are not going into post-secondary education because they contemplate an unconscionable debt load.

I'm very interested, and I hope you are, in listening to Mr. Prue tomorrow morning as he addresses this bill more fully. Thank you, Speaker, for your patience with me, and best wishes to Kathy Pendergast down there in Kitchener-Waterloo. Take care of yourself.

1650

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Pat Hoy:** I'm pleased to rise and comment on Bill 152, a bill put forward by the Honourable Deb Matthews, Minister of Children and Youth Services. The act, as we have learned, is An Act respecting a long-term strategy to reduce poverty in Ontario.

It does ask for some specific things to be done into the future. A specific poverty reduction target should be established, which brings about accountability for the actions that a government would take. They actually recognize that there should be some targets met over time to achieve these wonderful goals of reducing poverty in Ontario.

In the future, the government of Ontario is required to establish a specific poverty reduction target at least every five years, modernizing and looking back at what has been achieved to date. Then, at least every five years, the government of Ontario must review the long-term poverty reduction strategy that is in effect to ensure that it's appropriate for the time, I suspect, and that your targets have been met.

I know that the member for Lambton-Kent-Middlesex will recall, as I do, the joint meeting we had in Chatham with caregivers and others who are concerned and provide services to those living in poverty. It was an excellent meeting. There was no turf protection amongst the groups. They worked very, very well. We were impressed with that, both the member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex and I, that they genuinely wanted to work together to eradicate poverty in our province. They gave us excellent recommendations, which we forwarded to the minister. It's all part of her consultation program taken some time ago.

Now we're moving forward, along with the initiative of our Premier, to achieve the goals that will be set to help those who need and deserve that from their government—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** Here we are talking about a poverty bill in Ontario, and perhaps it's very appropriate, because there's going to be a lot of poverty in this country, in this province. I'm not sure the government understands the depth of the recession-cum-depression that we could be looking at here.

A lot of the recessions that happened in the past—1991, 1981, back in 1971; it seemed to happen every 10 years back in the last century. A lot of those recessions happened because people thought, "Oh, there's going to be a downturn," and the psychology of thinking about a recession caused the recession. Things were backing off a bit. There might have been a little instigation. In 1971, the recession was probably caused by the end of the Vietnam War; the Americans took billions of dollars out of their economy. That was the end of the war effort. That may have caused that.

In this case, it's a very real factor that has caused this recession. Something in the order of \$20 trillion to \$25 trillion disappeared out of our economy, out of the American economy, when the sub-prime mortgages came due and people walked away from their houses. That's a very real reason. You can't wash through \$20 trillion to \$25 trillion in a matter of months. This recession is going to be very long; it's going to be very deep. This government had better start doing something to condition Ontario to, first of all, survive the recession, and secondly, to be in a position to build on the way out.

I don't see this government doing anything about that, particularly when we stand here in the House and we talk about a poverty bill which, I say, may be appropriate, because there's going to be a lot of it around. We talk about plastic surgery; we talk about young offenders' housing; we talk about green bills; we talk about anything but the economy, which is going to be the end of it all.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments? The member for Stormont-Dundas-East Glengarry.

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** South Glengarry, that is.

It's a pleasure to have a couple of minutes this afternoon to speak on Bill 152, the Poverty Reduction Act.

I would like to commend the Minister of Children and Youth Services, the Honourable Deb Matthews, for her advocacy and her work. I know the work she has done in the past, coming to my riding, where we have a very strong poverty reduction team in place led by Dr. Mehroon Kassam. She's certainly working hard with the Social Development Council of Cornwall and Area to tackle the issues. I know the member from Welland suggested many things here this afternoon and spoke on many different aspects of poverty and where we're seeing it in colleges and universities and whatnot. This is what Mehroon Kassam and her team at the Social Development Council of Cornwall and Area are doing: They are out in the community, discovering and understanding where the needs are.



I think this is a bill that challenges us to set goals, and it moves us to the opportunities to achieve those goals. It also gives future governments the opportunity and the necessity to keep tackling those problems with regard to child poverty and all the issues related to poverty.

So I know that in our government and on our side we're looking at long-term strategies and opportunities to achieve those ideas and achieve those goals that we've set in place in the future and in future governments.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Questions and comments.

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** I am pleased to comment on the discussion initiated by the member for Welland in regard to Bill 152. This should be a concern to all of us, the widening gap between the rich and the poor in our province. This has been a trend for almost 15 years. Perhaps this recession will change it, but I'm concerned that it will not.

I think you can measure all of our societies in history, those that were successes and those that worked. There has to be some degree of egalitarianism in economics and distribution of funds between the citizens of a province and a country. When the gap widens, that leads to all sorts of problems within. However, this bill unfortunately does nothing to assist the concerns with poverty in this province. It is in fact a recipe for failure.

Why do I say that? This government has been spending future governments' money for quite a while now. I still recall a big announcement about \$80 billion of infrastructure money, but then I looked at it and it was over 30 years. The down payment by the government was only I think 20 or 30, but somehow they were making an announcement for \$80 billion, and I couldn't figure that out.

They're doing the same thing here. They are spending other people's money; in this case, the federal government's. If the federal government doesn't come through to fund the program they've set forth, they will of course, fail and they'll announce, "It's not our fault." But this bill, by tying it to funds that are not readily available and not agreed upon, is a recipe for failure.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Welland has two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** What better time for the government of Ontario to finance the co-op housing movement so that it can build co-op housing—co-op housing, non-profit housing, social housing, affordable housing across Ontario? The jobs it would create and the value it would provide for local economies would be the creation of affordable homes.

What better time for this government to expand daycare facilities so there's a daycare space for every child in the province? It would involve construction. It would involve hiring more daycare workers who, as I indicated to you before, are a class of people who are inherently poor because they traditionally earn low wages, notwithstanding that they perform some of the most important roles in our society: working with our littlest of kids at that most important time in their lives.

1700

What better time to raise the minimum wage? Because what did I tell you before? Small businesses—mom-and-pops—rarely pay minimum wage; they usually pay above minimum wage. As a matter of fact, one of the CFIB's spokespeople told me that in a private conversation. It's the Tim Hortons, the McDonalds and the Burger Kings that pay the minimum wage. Don't tell me they can't afford it. That's baloney. We know that bona fide small businesses, mom-and-poppers, rarely pay only minimum wage. It is the chains, the franchises, the big, deep-money operators who can well afford to increase the wage of their workers. Because that money is spent in the community. Every penny of it is spent; they don't save it. When you're making \$10.25 an hour, you don't save money. You don't stash it away in Nassau bank accounts. You spend it in your community; and you usually spend it close to home, in your own neighbourhood. You spend it with small business people. What better time to increase minimum wage than now? You want to address poverty? Do real things.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell:** I'm very pleased to enter the debate on Bill 152. I hardly know where to begin. Do I start with a speech from the candidate of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock? I heard the comments that the members from across the way made, so I felt that it was very important to start there, so that they could hear what their potential member had to say about poverty, because I know they're anxious to hear this.

When we talk about a strategy, we say why it's so important. Part of the strategy is to work with our providers to develop a comprehensive program in going forward. We on this side of the House, and across on that side as well, we understand that. We get it. But you know who else gets it? The candidate from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock. Here's what he has to say. He says—

*Interjections.*

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell:** Yes, he says, "We're in trouble when you have 50 poverty reduction programs but it's too complicated to help people." He gets it. He understands that we need to come forward with a strategy. So when I hear the members in the House stand up and the comments that were made from across the way, I don't think that he told them what he was thinking. I don't think he shared the thoughts that he was having on poverty reduction.

When I hear the comment from the member from York-Simcoe—"gesture politics"—I really must say that I just don't think that she took the time to really read about the strategy and to get her mind around how that encompasses the people of Ontario. The consultation that went into this strategy was very comprehensive. And you know what? The potential member gets it. He understands that. Hey, he might even have had a meeting. I don't know; I think he might have, because that's what we heard.



So people recognize that there is a lot of work to do. They recognize that when the child benefit that we put in place is in its maturity, 1.3 million children in low-income families will get up to \$1,300 a year. That is incredible when we think about the difference that that makes in each individual, in a family and in the children's lives, the potential for that.

Then I say to myself, how could the candidate from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock say something like that and then what happened when they came forward to vote on the child benefit? What do you think happened? It was voted against.

When we think about what we need, what we can do as a government to ensure that the foundation for our children is strong, that that fabric remains strong, we understand that a financial tool has to be used. We understand that. We understand that it's part of a comprehensive strategy. The candidate from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock understands that too, but they voted against it.

Mr. Speaker, I can't remember. Was he in the House?

*Interjections.*

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell:** Oh, that's right, yes. He's not a member yet, so I can say that, I guess, Mr. Speaker.

So we recognize that a five-year strategy will come back to the House. It's putting into legislation the consultation with Ontarians. This will keep the conversation going, because all of us working together will ensure that the strategy remains strong, that it remains relevant in all of our communities in Ontario, and that we continue the conversation to make sure that all of our groups are working at their maximum, because that's what the children need.

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** Which candidate is it?

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell:** Which candidate is it? That's a good question. Mr. Tory, candidate; yes, that's who.

One of the things that I wanted to share with the House as well: As you know, I represent a rural riding. Oh, yes, that reminds me. Before I get on to the rural communities, I did have to share just for one minute—I know that there are some pieces of advertising that we have seen—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I'd just like to ask the member for Huron-Bruce how this relates to Bill 152.

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell:** Well, I'm getting to it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for clearly zoning me in.

One of the things from that postcard—it is with someone who was just elected recently in Washington who has made significant investments for the United States people. We think about, and we've all heard him speak on numerous occasions about, the work that needs to be done for our children to ensure that they do have a strong foundation. So if one chooses to have your picture beside that and one chooses to have that as part of your advertising, you then would make the quantum leap to think that that, in fact, it was a shared strategy.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** If you get permission to use it.

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell:** Well, that would be another question.

And then, when I refer to the speech from ROMA, we do see a linkage, so I know that there is support. We know from this side of the House how important it is for our future, because our children are our future. We must ensure that they have the educational opportunities, the strong family connections, good food and a home; all of that is all part of the poverty strategy. So we know, in order to give them all the tools that we can, that is what they need. We recognize that they will need higher skills in today's economy.

But I digressed, and I wanted to speak about, specifically, rural communities. As you know, Mr. Speaker, we face different challenges in rural Ontario. The minister had the opportunity to come to the most beautiful riding in the province of Ontario, that being Huron-Bruce. We had the conversation with our providers and with the people from my riding.

Some of the things that they talked about: Poverty in rural Ontario looks different. It doesn't have a face. You can't see it the same as you can in our large urban centres. What we have referred to—the homeless in our area are called “couch surfers.” It's when our young people don't have a place to live and they surf from couch to couch, from home to home. In rural Ontario, we take the kids in, but then they keep moving around and moving around, so it tends to be faceless. We don't see it, but that doesn't mean that it's not there. I know that because we are the breadbasket of Ontario, we also don't have this same lack of food. Our food banks have access to a lot of—now, it's certainly seasonal, but we do have access to food at a lower rate because we're not transporting it from greater distances. That does give the facelessness even more emphasis.

1710

Another barrier in rural Ontario is that we simply don't have public transportation. We don't have the numbers to ever make it viable. So when we think about how much money it requires in order to hold down a job—you have to have a car; you have to have a means of transportation. That can be quite costly, whereas public transportation, for a young person starting out, is much more cost-effective than the actual purchase of a car by the time you insure it, gas it and everything else that's connected to moving a car down the road.

The other thing is that we just don't have the same educational facilities as our urban counterparts as well. Even the services that are available in our rural communities are difficult; we just don't have as many.

The other thing that makes it difficult in rural communities is that we all know each other so well that there's sometimes an unwillingness to come forward and to take those services that are put in place for people in need because of the stigma that is sometimes attached to them. We have a tendency of doing without rather than getting a hand up.

I do want to thank you for the opportunity to speak to the Poverty Reduction Act. This is a piece of legislation



that is important for the people of Ontario. It's important for the economy of Ontario as well. It's ensuring that we have a strong foundation and the ability to adapt to a new environment that will be created, coming out of what we are in today.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I heard the previous speaker make reference—of course she dwells on the issue of poverty, which is very important, but she made reference as well to an event that is taking place this week that you would be familiar with, Mr. Speaker, in a very wonderful part of the country. No doubt one of the issues that will be discussed on that occasion would be the issue of poverty.

I was looking at one of the cards or pamphlets. We cannot use them as props in this House. I can read them, but I can't hold it up as a prop in the House. It has the leader of the Conservative Party on it, and he does not have a grey hair. I want to know how he can do that, because my hair is turning grey, and all the stress of a campaign usually does that. But there are four people on this: Prime Minister Stephen Harper, President Barack Obama, Prime Minister Gordon Brown, and Premier Gordon Campbell are all on it. I don't know whether they're endorsing him or what, but I always thought you had to have the permission of these individuals to be able to use them on a pamphlet.

Now, all of these individuals have had to deal in one way or another with the issue of poverty, which is why I make reference to the card that I was talking about that I won't use as a prop. But I know that one of the difficulties for those of the previous Conservative government—not the newer members in the Legislature—and some of them probably were concerned at that time, was the issue of the treatment of the poor at that time. I believe that the allocation of funding—in other words, for welfare, for disability—was cut by 22% by the previous government. When this government is trying to help people out, it remembers, as members of the Conservative caucus get up to talk about poverty, that when they had the chance, instead of lifting these folks up, they cut that by 22%. So that's where we have to start in trying to assist these individuals.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** It is, I think, a delight in this House to hear the rather articulate remarks that are always put forward by the member for Huron—Bruce. I think she certainly framed the argument very, very well. She compliments the Minister of Children and Youth Services, the Honourable Deb Matthews, who went out throughout the province and consulted with groups north, south, east, and west, to really get their input on what they're seeing on the ground.

I know she had the opportunity to visit Peterborough on two occasions. There's the poverty reduction committee that was spearheaded by my good friend the mayor of the city of Peterborough, His Worship Paul

Ayotte—Deb Matthews was there to listen to that group and get their ideas, and then came back a second time. That's how one can go about developing, I think, positive public policy in the province of Ontario: by reaching out to people on a wide basis to get their opinions.

It was great to hear the member from St. Catharines talk about the 21% reduction in benefits for those people who were on OW and ODSP during the eight years of Tory rule. I was still on city council in those days, as chair of social services, so I know the impact it had on those individuals. They were just devastated by those cuts. They were trying to work through their personal difficult situations, and to get that cut just wasn't appropriate.

This bill is about lifting people up and providing them with a new beginning. The member from Huron—Bruce, I think, articulated the arguments extremely well.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I want to stand up and congratulate the member from Huron—Bruce on her speech. I think she outlined very well our strategy for reducing poverty in the province of Ontario, and she mentioned many different elements. At the beginning, I was confused about who she was talking about until she said it was about talk and action. Some people talk, and our government acts. This is what Minister Matthews was doing, after she went across the province of Ontario, engaged all the members of this House from both sides in the reduction strategy and then invited everyone—stakeholders, concerned citizens in the province of Ontario—to get involved and give her advice in order to help us, as a government, to reduce poverty in the province of Ontario.

All of us know that this is a very, very complex issue. That's why the debate is taking place in this place. That's why we need any advice possible. That's why we went out, to the north, to the south, to the east, to the centre, seeking advice, listening to many people who have great experience in this regard. It gives us the tools we need to reduce poverty in the province of Ontario.

Also, it would be the first time ever in the province of Ontario—under the leadership of our Premier, Dalton McGuinty, and the direction of the Minister of Children and Youth Services, who is the chair of the cabinet committee to reduce poverty in the province of Ontario—that we will create a task force to commit to reduce poverty in the province and create a wave, a movement, in order to help the vulnerable people among us.

I'm glad to see our government taking charge in this regard, and I'm happy to see Minister Matthews taking the lead on it, because she's a great person, she's a great advocate on behalf of vulnerable people in the province of Ontario. Under her leadership, we're going to see a reduction very soon.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** Certainly, I want to express my appreciation to the member for Huron—Bruce



for her comments on Bill 152. When she spoke about rural poverty—I think that she and I have probably had very similar experiences. Her children are about the same age as mine. She has probably experienced having friends of our children come into the house and they're there for an overnight, and then the overnight becomes a second one and a third one and on. As mothers, we have a suspicion about what's going on, but we don't ask. We just make sure that the visiting friend is comfortable and has clothing and is properly fed. Then, one day, all of a sudden that child has a sense that they've overstayed their welcome, and they go on to someone else's house. As the member said, in rural Ontario we tend to be very quiet about it. We suspect what's going on, but we never really quite confront it. We never say to the child, "Do you have a home to go to?" We just simply make sure that while they're in our care, they get the best that we can offer them and from there we see them move on. The couch-surfing phenomenon is something that we see very often in rural Ontario. It is something, like I say, that all of us, by not confronting it, actually support. But that's all we can do at times. It's all we know how to do, to make sure that those who come into our homes are welcome and we take care of them the best we can.

1720

In rural Ontario, we also have a large number of what we refer to as the working poor. These are people who are seasonally employed. They have employment for part of the year, then it's gone. They add to the rural poverty that we see, another part of poverty that we don't address very well in rural Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Huron-Bruce now has two minutes to reply.

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell:** I want to thank the Minister of Transportation, the member from Peterborough, the member from London-Fanshawe and the member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex.

I can tell you that the members on this side of the House and around the other side stand strong to address poverty in this province of Ontario. Speaker, I know you haven't had the opportunity to sit in on any of our caucus meetings, but I can tell you that it warms your heart when you hear the commitment to the children of this province. To me, the poverty strategy coming forward addresses the need for a comprehensive strategy on going forward: identifying targets, identifying timelines and making a commitment to it and a process when we will consult, when we will speak, when we will report.

You know what? You just wouldn't know it was me if I didn't stand up and say something like this: Because none of the members from the opposite side of the House want to comment on my comments, I guess I have to assume that the Leader of the Opposition's comments are the only comments that I can take from my comments that I received from ROMA, and certainly from that it is my sense that the Leader of the Opposition supports the poverty reduction strategy by a comprehensive strategy going forward, as identified from his ROMA speech. I didn't hear anything or any debate coming from that side of the House, even though they had an opportunity.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It really is my privilege to rise and support addressing poverty in the province of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** I rise in the House today to share with my fellow members my commitment to the issue of reducing poverty in our province, but also to let you know about my disappointment in Mr. McGuinty's approach.

In November 2007, I was a signatory to a multi-partisan letter called To Make Poverty History. One of the key action items in this letter included investing additional resources into subsidized housing. Mr. McGuinty has a disgraceful record on this issue. He had the nerve to sit on millions and millions of dollars given to our province by the federal government to build affordable housing units in Ontario. Mr. McGuinty just sat on that money. He did not invest in this crucial sector, which for many is just one step away from homelessness.

In the city of Toronto alone, the affordable housing waiting list still sits around 70,000, and that number increases every day. One man who shared his reason for affordable housing spoke with greater realism than I could ever offer on this issue, so I would like to quote from what he said:

"Without a place to live, you can't do anything with your life. You can't get a job, go to school or take proper care of your health. You also become very isolated. So your social and employment skills don't develop properly. It's like being locked in a closet for several years and then being released.

"When I moved into Houselink, my life turned around. I've developed skills I didn't even know I had.

"The bottom line is that without supportive housing, I would not be alive today," he said. "Supportive housing saved my life and the lives of thousands of others" like me. That's the end of the quote.

The lack of affordable housing is one of the root causes of poverty, as this gentleman so clearly stated. Without a permanent home, it is difficult, if not impossible, to get your life back on track and break that poverty cycle. In addition, 28% of Ontarians spend over 30% of their income on shelter alone. Our food banks are busier than ever because people are forced to choose shelter over food, and that choice is getting harder and harder every day.

Although the Ontario government committed in 2003 to build 26,600 affordable housing units, only a mere 6,400 units have been built to date. On a person-to-person basis, Mr. McGuinty's government's spending on housing is amongst the worst of all provinces, well below Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Alberta and Saskatchewan.

Over 124,000 households remain on the waiting list for social housing, where the rent is geared to income. The wait time ranges from five to 12 years. Of the 250,000 social housing units in the province, most of them are aging and in dire need of repair and maintenance. Perhaps the Premier could have invested some



of that money into these buildings instead of his private slush fund and cricket fields. Why not address the root causes of poverty instead of creating yet another stigmatizing report?

The PC Party has a solid track record on reducing the number of Ontarians who live in poverty. This government cannot make that claim. In our first four years in government, our government reduced poverty by 19%. This was done through proactive initiatives designed to address the root causes of poverty, and we pulled a quarter of a million people out of poverty in five short years. What has the McGuinty government done in six years? Nothing, with more nothing on the horizon.

Poor families do not need another report to tell them that they are poor. They need a real plan and they need real action. Unfortunately, Bill 152 is yet another example of how the McGuinty government's symbolism is stronger than its substance. Forty-one per cent of all children who currently live in poverty have at least one parent working full-time all year and yet do not earn enough to lift their families out of poverty. A meeting that convenes the next meeting to discuss a report that may or may not see the light of day is not going to help these parents feed their children. A solid economic plan where businesses see Ontario as a place to invest and can continue to afford to operate their businesses without being hamstrung by red tape and high taxes is what creates jobs that can offer these families a living wage. Creating a plan, not a report, is how Mr. McGuinty can address this situation now.

I have been involved in the Halton Food for Thought program for a number of years, and they are proudly celebrating the expansion of their high school initiative. As proud as I am of this commitment and how it is growing, I truly wish that this program did not even have to exist. This is not a realistic dream, I know, as I am sure that this year and next we will see a greater number of students who are not getting enough to eat before they come to school.

Thirteen thousand Burlington residents live below the poverty line, including one in 11 children under the age of 14. This breaks my heart as a leader in the community, as a member of this Legislature and as a grandmother, because there are actions that we can take to fix this, and Mr. McGuinty has to begin taking the right initiatives now.

1730

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has a meaningful statement on poverty that is particularly salient to our debate here today, and I'm going to quote again: "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and wellbeing of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control."

Our party has always believed that our most vulnerable citizens must be supported and protected, and we put our actions where our mouth is.

As a society, we're only as strong as our most vulnerable citizens. If Mr. McGuinty's government continues without an economic plan and refuses to take action to stem the tide of this current downturn, more jobs will be lost and more people will slip below the poverty level.

Keeping people employed is one active way that we as a government can help prevent poverty. It is not a complete fix, but it is a key ingredient. The McGuinty government can accomplish this goal by reducing tax strain on businesses that are already struggling in these difficult times. If they can maintain their labour force, their employees may have to buckle down, but the impact on their families and our communities will not be as significant.

The Ontario Association of Food Banks released an important and very timely report on the economic cost of reducing poverty in Ontario. The report concludes that the economic cost of poverty in Ontario comes to \$32 billion to \$38 billion a year. Yes, I say "billion." So when Mr. McGuinty says that tax cuts to businesses to keep their employees working is not an affordable option, I say that the cost to families and to the province to not cut taxes is far higher.

Bill 152 is an embarrassment. There are no details. There are no strategies. There are no direct actions that will be taken to lift our citizens out of poverty. It simply identifies that we have poverty in our province.

What I do not understand is that if this government were truly committed to reducing poverty, they would support the groups that are already on the ground, working and helping these families. If the financial toll that poverty takes on our province is over \$30 billion, then it makes economic sense to me to invest in the organizations which are already set up to support our poor.

It is disgraceful that in a country with such affluence we cannot seem to reduce or even eradicate poverty. Poverty rates for children in aboriginal, racialized, new-immigrant and lone-mother-led families are at least double the national average. Quebec has cut its child poverty rate by 50% or more during the past 10 years. Why is Mr. McGuinty not conferring with Mr. Charest to find out how he accomplished that? My guess is that it took action and leadership, something our Premier is lacking.

Ontario has lost more than 235,000 manufacturing jobs just in the last six years, and they have not been replaced. Every plan has failed. Three out of every four jobs created in Ontario between December 2007 and October 2008 were part-time jobs. Most people face a 25% drop in income when they go from a well-paid manufacturing job to other employment.

I ask you, could the writing on the wall be more clear for Mr. McGuinty? We need a jobs strategy and we need it now; we need tax reductions to keep current businesses operating, and we need that now. Because if actions are not taken, and if they're not taken soon, it really will be too late for many Ontarians.



Our safety nets have some pretty big holes in them, and that needs to be addressed immediately. To those who are hoping for employment insurance should anything happen, don't hold your breath. Due to the changes in eligibility requirements, only 29% of Ontario's unemployed were eligible to receive EI in 2007.

Last year, Environics commissioned a poll that demonstrated that 81% of Ontarians believe it's more important than ever, in a recession, for government to make it a priority to help poor Canadians. Investing in Ontarians means, in part, keeping our businesses competitive through tax cuts so we can at least maintain our labour force. But what about those people living in poverty who are not able to work? Seventeen per cent of all female seniors and 6% of all male seniors have an annual income of less than \$10,000. These seniors have lived in, worked in and contributed to our communities. They have helped build our quality of life, and we cannot let them live their lives in abject poverty.

We have a duty to our seniors, to the youth of tomorrow and to families in this province to address the root causes of this issue and move forward with a concrete plan to make a visible reduction in poverty in Ontario.

Bill 152 will not get us there. It simply lacks the substance we need to be anything more than a bureaucratic bungle. I know my colleagues are willing to help. They're willing to help this government create a working strategy that actually addresses these issues, and we hope that the government will be receptive to our ideas in the committee process.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I listened carefully to the member for Burlington. This is interesting: Burlington is certainly perceived by the rest of Ontario as perhaps one of the most affluent communities in this province, and Mrs. Savoline reveals to us that poverty is pandemic, that it isn't just in downtown Toronto and that it takes many shapes and forms. Indeed, when she identified who is poor in Burlington, she spoke of the very same things I did about who is poor in Welland, a small industrial town.

It is simply not enough to produce these saccharine pieces of legislation that are all fluff. It's like cotton candy, you know, that gooey, sticky stuff you used to get at the carnival. I'm sure the cotton candy was a real lure to you as a kid at the agricultural fairs up on Highway 6 where you live. But when you bite into it, it's like there's nothing there. There's just sweet; there's no substance. This is, I suppose, a cotton candy bill; it gets the poverty activists all excited. But if you want to address poverty, you do it in concrete ways.

I didn't get a chance to talk about homelessness. Homelessness isn't just a Toronto phenomenon. Homelessness is a small-town phenomenon.

The issue of rural poverty—think about this—where you don't have access because you're not in close proximity to a food bank or even a church out there in the country, and especially seniors in rural poverty. You

don't have access to a food bank; you don't have access to a soup kitchen. You don't have access to the Open Arms Mission or to their second-hand store, yet another very important facet.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** Let me first of all say that I'm a firm believer that everyone obviously brings into this House their good intentions and their knowledge of their community and wants to do the best for the province of Ontario. Having known the member from Burlington in another life, when I was Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and she was chair of the region of Halton, I do respect her. I take issue, though, with a number of comments she made early on about affordable housing.

I can well remember back in 1995, when they were first elected, that one of the very first things the Harris Tories did was cut down every affordable housing project that was in the planning stages and just got rid of the whole program completely. It wasn't really until 2005 that I had the privilege, on behalf of our government, to sign an affordable housing agreement with the then-government of Canada—I think it was the Chrétien government, and it could have been the Martin government as well. We actually signed, in May 2005, a \$600-million joint agreement with the federal government that contributed \$300 million of provincial funds and \$300 million of federal funds; of course, it's all taxpayers' money. That created some 20,000 units of affordable housing. So I honestly don't know where she gets this notion that somehow we haven't done anything about affordable housing. There is much, much more to be done.

1740

We spent \$100 million just last year on the refurbishing of the affordable housing that's out there right now, and much of it's very old, about 30 or 40 years old. I do believe that we have to stick to the facts of the situation.

Can more be done? Absolutely. Should more be done? Absolutely. But we have to start with the kind of strategy that's contained in this bill so that we can reduce poverty once and for all in the province of Ontario, which is to everyone's benefit.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** I'm pleased to be able to comment on the comments of my distinguished colleague the member for Burlington.

When we're talking about long-term care or affordable housing, it seems to me I remember that Premier Peterson put a freeze on long-term care. He picked on the most vulnerable of our society, the seniors, and he put a freeze on long-term-care facilities and he didn't build any. The reason I mention that is because the Minister of the Environment doesn't want to talk about now; he goes back to Genesis; that's where he usually starts his harangue.

We presently have a freeze, and have since this government was elected some four years ago, on long-term-



care facilities. Just like Premier Peterson, they're keying in on the most vulnerable—I'm looking for a room and a bed, so this is from my own heart. They are keying in on the most vulnerable of our society, our seniors, who have contributed so much to our society. This heartless McGuinty government has picked up the term of Peterson, that heartless Premier Peterson of the old days, and frozen new beds for long-term-care facilities. They can't deny that because they know it's a fact, and they've also caused a huge problem in our hospitals as a result.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments? The member for Etobicoke-Rexdale?

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** I'll accept Etobicoke-Rexdale, Speaker, although it's officially known as Etobicoke North.

I'd first of all like to commend the member from Cambridge from the Conservative side: To actually blame current poverty on Premier Peterson is like the current American administration actually invoking the errors of Ronald Reagan. I would invite him to perhaps slightly update, at least by perhaps two, three or four administrations, bringing forward.

I'd also like to just echo the comment of our Minister of the Environment, Mr. Gerretsen. While we would at no time, for example, with reference to the MPP from Burlington from the Conservative side, question her personal commitment to poverty reduction and the heart-felt gesture of compassion with which she speaks with great energy here, I think her characterization of her own party as being pro-poverty reduction is, to put it mildly, a bit rich.

I think those of us who were outside of this Legislature watching internal workings can remember, for example, \$100 million being committed by the Conservative government, fed to a consulting company, Andersen Consulting, for a review of welfare and social assistance. We can remember their essential dismantling of any number of programs, whether you consider it affordable housing or social assistance, and essentially kind of putting into suspended animation a whole host of programs that might have helped modest-income Ontarians.

In particular, we remember the tuna gambit, where a former minister, I believe of social services, at the time essentially counselled, instead of "Let them eat cake," to "Let them eat tuna." That's really our, I guess you could say, gestalt take on the Harris engagement with poverty communities.

So I would hope that there's some update of perception and therefore support of the McGuinty government's deep commitment to poverty reduction in Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes the time for questions and comments. The member for Burlington has two minutes to reply.

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** I first want to start by thanking the members from Welland, Kingston and the Islands, Cambridge and Etobicoke North for their comments.

This report, I think, is very heavy on bureaucracy. It's got a lot of mechanisms to support a poverty reduction strategy, but mechanisms aren't actions. There are targets

here which depend heavily on actions by other levels of government. That does not mean that this government is moving towards some kind of action on poverty reduction.

The bill is very vague. What is poverty? What are the determinants of poverty? Nothing in this bill tells us what that is.

The Conservative government introduced legislation which penalized governments who did not meet their budgetary commitments. The Liberal government repealed this legislation, which would have penalized any government that failed to meet its budgetary commitment to reduce poverty directly or indirectly. To me, that's sidestepping the issue. So once again we're into symbolism instead of substance. This is all glitz and glamour.

How can anybody argue with a poverty reduction strategy? You can't argue with the intent of that, but what you can argue with is the fact that there is absolutely no substance in this report. There doesn't seem to be any will on the part of this government to move forward in a meaningful way, and I think it has done this issue a tremendous disservice. What's more, it's embarrassing, in my opinion, for the poor in this province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I like that word "gestalt." I think we've got to use that word more around here. Dr. Shafiq Qaadri I think put some new vocabulary into the Hansard here, and the reporter from Hansard's looking all over trying to figure out how to spell the word "gestalt."

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** She knows how to spell it.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** She does. I know. She's probably the only one who does. Anyway, "gestalt."

I was just listening to a number of members referring to their ridings and the situation in their ridings. As the member from Welland has said many times, I think here we're sometimes too caught up in the notes given to us by people in central offices, and I think more of us should start talking about real people in our ridings and not read from notes all the time. If we can't speak about real people without notes, we've got a problem. That's not to say we shouldn't consult with notes and get the data—that's fine—but I'm just saying we should talk about real people in our ridings.

As members were talking about rural poverty and things going on in the Niagara Peninsula and everything, I was trying to relate it to my own situation in Eglinton-Lawrence. If we look at real poverty, I was thinking, you know, I've got a Toronto Housing building in my riding called 855 Roselawn. There are a lot of seniors in there; there are a lot of people who have problems—they're developmentally delayed, etc.—but they are all people trying to get by. They have very small little units, meagre furniture, but it's interesting sometimes. When you go door-knocking or visiting people during elections and at other times, it's amazing: You'll go to one of these little apartments with this poor little person there who's got maybe some furniture that they picked up at Goodwill or something, but when they come to the door and open the



apartment door, they smile and are glad to see you and say, "Thanks for coming. Can you sit down? Do you want a cup of coffee?" But sometimes it's a totally different reaction.

1750

You go to some large houses in my riding even—I'll go to the door and there's a BMW in the driveway, there's a Mercedes-Benz in the driveway—a big, huge home, 4,000 square feet, and they've got a swimming pool in the back. I go to the door and they snarl at you even before you get there. They don't know who I am or whatever it is; there's a snarl. I say, "How are you?" and introduce myself. They don't even want to talk to you. And it's got nothing to do with the wrong party or whatever it is. But it's amazing how these immigrants, workers, the newcomers that come from the Philippines, for instance—a lot of them are the most fantastic caregivers you'll ever want to meet. They live in the Bathurst Street area. Again, they live in small walk-up apartments, but you go to their door, no matter night or day, and they greet you with a smile. They are pleasant and say, "This Canada's a great country. Toronto's a great place. I've got this job, I work hard and my kid goes to school." They meet you with a smile and with a sense of welcoming, yet they're poor. Some of them have nothing but those sticks of furniture.

Then you can imagine what happens in some cases. We've had a very serious problem in Toronto with bedbugs. I know many of you think bedbugs are something you have jokes about, but this is a serious health issue in the city of Toronto. I remember—I think she was about 88 years of age; she had a bedbug problem. This poor lady had to get rid of all her furniture, had to get new furniture and had to get fumigators in. Not once, not twice, but three times she had to fumigate her little apartment to get rid of bedbugs. As you know, with bedbugs, if you get rid of them out of your unit, they may go to the next unit. So everybody in the building lives with the reality of these awful things that bite you. They get into your clothes. You're embarrassed about it; you don't know what to do. Toronto Public Health has been trying to help. I know we've got St. Clair West Services for Seniors. They're in a number of buildings right now trying to help people cope with this struggle.

You can imagine coming home every night to your little apartment. You can't really sit and watch television and you can't really go to bed at night because you're infested with these bedbugs. That's the face of poverty, real poverty, that people sometimes don't get a chance to experience—but that's one of the realities.

The other thing about poverty that tells us why we have to have a comprehensive strategy like we have here is that it's not just about increasing social assistance rates, which obviously we need to, and it's not just about minimum wage, which we're increasing, and more affordable housing; it's also that in many of these areas there is a concentration and they're part of the 13 designated neighbourhoods in Toronto. There are old project areas like Regent Park, which you've heard of, and others

where there are people living in poverty in these public housing units. Sadly, what happens is that along with the poverty come the by-products of poverty, sometimes violence, because these people may not have a job, they may be desperately looking to buy clothes for their kids and to send their kids to school.

One of the by-products that they have to live with is not only coming home to a very meagre place to live that is not up to what we would call Canadian standards, but they're also faced with the reality of fear and violence. They say, "I can't send my kid to the recreation centre because the gang members are there trying to recruit him. I'm afraid to send my child to that school because there are too many gang members in that school. I'm worried about my child. Every night, I worry about whether my child will make it home at night." That's poverty combined with fear, and it's not the type of fear you walk away from and you lock the door on. People live with this deep-seated fear because in too many cases there are situations that are difficult to control, where there's violence and people living in very difficult housing situations.

That is part of the reality of poverty that we sometimes don't see in statistics. These are people in many cases who, through no fault of their own—they may have been ill; one of the partners was ill; there may just be one parent; they lost a job. They're in this situation and they can't get out. They feel really trapped. This is why whatever we do to invest in our schools, to make our schools safe hubs where children get a breakfast program, a lunch program, an after-school program—so it's not just about housing. You also have to have a very supportive school system.

In Lawrence Heights in my area, which is one of these designated areas of high need, we also have an amazing community health centre. I don't know if members have them in their ridings, but there's nothing better than having a community health centre in your riding. They are hubs of health care and nutrition. They give moral support. They also have fitness classes. They teach people how to eat nutritionally. They deal with the by-products of drugs and violence. So there is a need to invest in community health and community health centres. That's why what our government has done—for the first time in about 10 years there are substantive increases in expanding community health centres and building satellite community health centres.

Community health centres and schools are critically important in dealing with poverty. We just can't look at this strategy in terms of one act. We can't look at this strategy just in terms of the Ontario child benefit, which is a great new advance in helping people cope because every child will get up to \$1,100 eventually; that \$1,100 will help mothers and fathers. It takes all these components to get people to cope with poverty.

Poverty is something that people sometimes relate to and say, "Well, there are poverty challenges perhaps in this part of Canada, maybe in the Maritimes. There are poverty challenges in the north. There's poverty and un-

employment in certain cities in Ontario.” But sometimes we tend to look at Toronto and say, “Toronto’s a place where there’s Bay Street. Toronto’s a place where there are all those jobs and people and they have amazing activity.” We’ve got the new Frank Gehry AGO, which is an incredible piece of Canadian architecture. We’ve got these wonderful things, but within Toronto we have some of the poorest areas in all of Canada.

If you go in the Jane Street corridor of Toronto, to different parts of Parkdale, to different parts of Mimico, to different neighbourhoods, you’re going to see some of the deepest poverty in all of Canada. That’s why for many years we’ve been trying to tell the federal government, the Martin government and the government of Stephen Harper, “You’ve got all these programs, like unemployment insurance that is readily available if you’re out of work in Nova Scotia. You don’t need to work as many weeks, and then you can stay on longer if you’re in Nova Scotia and you’re out of work. Yet if a person is out of work in one of these poor areas in Toronto, in one of these poor areas in the Niagara Peninsula, they can’t get unemployment insurance; they don’t qualify. They have to have more weeks. Then if they do qualify, they stay on for fewer weeks and months.”

That’s one of the other factors that I think contribute to poverty in certain parts of Ontario that all of us have to speak out on a lot more. Why should a person who pays unemployment insurance, who works for 10, 20 years and pays into the EI fund, be told, because they live in Ontario, “Sorry, you don’t qualify”? Over 60% of the people who apply for EI in Ontario don’t qualify. Can you imagine, if the people of Quebec were discriminated against in the same way, what the hue and cry would be from Quebec?

The thing I wanted to remind everybody of, whether it’s Ottawa down by LeBreton Flats and these areas, where there has been deep-seated poverty, that is an area

for investment. We invest in people; that’s why I think getting rid of poverty is about investing in people. We use our schools, first of all, and our health care system.

Thank God we live in Ontario and Canada, because if you talk to people in the United States, they tell you they’re deathly afraid because they know if they lose their job, they lose their health care system. If they lose their job, they lose their health care. So if their kids get sick, if grandmother gets sick in the United States, they have no doctor, no hospital. If they have to go to emergency, they won’t go because they need a Visa card and they don’t have a Visa card. At least in Canada and Ontario, if you do need health care, it’s available to you whether you are out of work or not. But in the United States that kind of protection disappears when you lose your job because the job is twinned with your health care.

That’s why we need to invest in our health care system, and especially in people who sometimes do need extra help in these areas, who are suffering from the consequence of poverty.

Health care, education, assistance, housing: It’s a very complex series of issues. Minister Matthews has taken this upon herself, and it’s a job that many people probably wouldn’t want to do. Day in, day out, she’s been fighting for the poor. She’s come forward with this legislation. That’s why it’s very disconcerting when I see members of the Conservative Party standing up and trying to demean the minister or demean her attempts, when she’s trying her very best, especially with the legacy of Mike Harris, which basically devastated most of Ontario for eight years.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** It being 6 o’clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1802.*



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Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
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		Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu

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Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
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Jeffrey, Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
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Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
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Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
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McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
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Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
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Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland—Quinte West	
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Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
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Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton—Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga—Erindale	Minister of Small Business and Consumer Services / Ministre des Petites Entreprises et des Services aux consommateurs
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	
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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Paul Miller  
Bas Balkissoon, Mike Colle  
Gerry Martiniuk, Paul Miller  
Bill Murdoch, Yasir Naqvi  
Michael Prue, Tony Ruprecht  
Mario Sergio  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de  
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qadri  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon  
Laurel C. Broten, Kim Craitor  
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo  
Helena Jaczek, Shafiq Qadri  
Khalil Ramal, Peter Shurman  
Elizabeth Witmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Select Committee on Elections / Comité spécial des élections**

Chair / Président: Greg Sorbara  
Howard Hampton, Greg Sorbara  
Norman W. Sterling, David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions / Comité  
spécial de la santé mentale et des dépendances**

Chair / Président: Kevin Daniel Flynn  
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Elliott  
Bas Balkissoon, Christine Elliott  
Kevin Daniel Flynn, France Gélinas  
Helena Jaczek, Sylvia Jones  
Jeff Leal, Liz Sandals  
Maria Van Bommel  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial





## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

<b>Diagnostic services</b>	
Ms. Lisa MacLeod .....	5237
<b>Parents Reaching Out</b>	
Mrs. Laura Albanese .....	5237
<b>Ontario budget</b>	
Mrs. Julia Munro .....	5237
<b>Skills training</b>	
Mr. Khalil Ramal .....	5238
<b>La communauté d'Orléans</b>	
M. Phil McNeely .....	5238
<b>Ontario economy</b>	
Mr. Ted Arnott .....	5238
<b>Township of Woolwich</b>	
Ms. Leeanna Pendergast .....	5238
<b>Steel industry</b>	
Mr. Paul Miller .....	5239
<b>Steel industry</b>	
Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis .....	5239
<b>Private members' public business</b>	
The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters) .....	5239

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI

<b>Tobacco Damages and Health Care Costs Recovery Act, 2009, Bill 155, Mr. Bentley / Loi de 2009 sur le recouvrement du montant des dommages et du coût des soins de santé imputables au tabac, projet de loi 155, M. Bentley</b>	
First reading agreed to .....	5239

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES

<b>Tobacco-related health care costs / Coûts des soins de santé reliés au tabac</b>	
Hon. Christopher Bentley .....	5240
<b>Tobacco-related health care costs</b>	
Mrs. Christine Elliott .....	5240
<b>Tobacco-related health care costs</b>	
Mr. Peter Kormos .....	5241
<b>International Women's Day</b>	
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	5242
Mrs. Christine Elliott .....	5242
Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....	5243

## PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

<b>Identity theft</b>	
Mr. Michael Prue .....	5244
<b>Multiple myeloma</b>	
Mr. Khalil Ramal .....	5244
<b>Protection of minors</b>	
Mr. Gerry Martiniuk .....	5244
<b>Multiple myeloma</b>	
Mr. Michael Prue .....	5244
<b>Child custody</b>	
Mr. Kim Craitor .....	5245
<b>Diabetes treatment</b>	
Mr. Gerry Martiniuk .....	5245
<b>Interprovincial bridge</b>	
Mr. Yasir Naqvi .....	5245
<b>Multiple myeloma</b>	
Mr. Khalil Ramal .....	5245
<b>Child custody</b>	
Mr. Jim Brownell .....	5246
<b>Diabetes treatment</b>	
Mrs. Julia Munro .....	5246
<b>Lupus</b>	
Mr. Kim Craitor .....	5246

## ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

<b>Poverty Reduction Act, 2009, Bill 152, Ms. Matthews / Loi de 2009 sur la réduction de la pauvreté, projet de loi 152, Mme Matthews</b>	
Mrs. Julia Munro .....	5247
Mr. Peter Kormos .....	5249
Mrs. Maria Van Bommel .....	5249
Mr. Ted Chudleigh .....	5249
Mr. Phil McNeely .....	5250
Mrs. Julia Munro .....	5250
Mr. Peter Kormos .....	5250
Mr. Pat Hoy .....	5253
Mr. Ted Chudleigh .....	5253
Mr. Jim Brownell .....	5253
Mr. Gerry Martiniuk .....	5254
Mr. Peter Kormos .....	5254
Mrs. Carol Mitchell .....	5254
Hon. James J. Bradley .....	5256
Mr. Jeff Leal .....	5256
Mr. Khalil Ramal .....	5256
Mrs. Maria Van Bommel .....	5256
Mrs. Carol Mitchell .....	5257
Mrs. Joyce Savoline .....	5257
Mr. Peter Kormos .....	5259



Hon. John Gerretsen .....	5259
Mr. Gerry Martiniuk .....	5259
Mr. Shafiq Qaadri .....	5260
Mrs. Joyce Savoline.....	5260
Mr. Mike Colle .....	5260
Second reading debate deemed adjourned.....	5262

# CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Wednesday 4 March 2009 / Mercredi 4 mars 2009

## ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

### Employment Standards Amendment Act (Organ Donor Leave), 2009, Bill 154, Mr. Fonseca / Loi de 2009 modifiant la Loi sur les normes d'emploi (congé pour don d'organe), projet de loi 154, M. Fonseca

Hon. Peter Fonseca .....	5217
Mr. Vic Dhillon .....	5218
Mr. Norm Miller .....	5218
Mr. Peter Kormos .....	5219
Mrs. Carol Mitchell .....	5219
Mrs. Joyce Savoline .....	5219
Mr. Vic Dhillon .....	5219
Mr. Robert Bailey .....	5220
Ms. Andrea Horwath .....	5221
Mr. Jim Brownell .....	5221
Mr. Gerry Martiniuk .....	5221
Mr. Robert Bailey .....	5222
Ms. Andrea Horwath .....	5222
Mr. Michael A. Brown .....	5225
Mr. Ted Chudleigh .....	5225
Mr. Bill Mauro .....	5225
Mrs. Julia Munro .....	5225
Ms. Andrea Horwath .....	5226
Mr. Bill Mauro .....	5226
Second reading debate deemed adjourned .....	5227

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....	5227
Mme France Gélinas .....	5227
The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters) .....	5227

## ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

### Ontario economy

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer .....	5227
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	5227

### Manufacturing jobs

Mr. Toby Barrett .....	5228
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	5228

### Ontario economy

Mr. Howard Hampton .....	5228
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	5229

### Manufacturing jobs

Mr. Howard Hampton .....	5229
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	5229

### Government spending

Mr. Frank Klees .....	5230
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	5230

### Manufacturing jobs

Mr. Paul Miller .....	5231
Hon. Dalton McGuinty .....	5231
Ms. Andrea Horwath .....	5231

### Employment supports

Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis .....	5231
Hon. Michael Bryant .....	5232
Hon. John Milloy .....	5232

### Small business

Ms. Lisa MacLeod .....	5232
Hon. Harinder S. Takhar .....	5232

### Home care

Mme France Gélinas .....	5233
Hon. David Caplan .....	5233

### Aboriginal education

Mr. Bill Mauro .....	5233
Hon. John Milloy .....	5233

### Deadstock industry

Mr. Ernie Hardeman .....	5234
Hon. Leona Dombrowsky .....	5234

### Services for disabled children

Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....	5235
Hon. Madeleine Meilleur .....	5235

### Health care

Mr. David Oraziatti .....	5235
Hon. David Caplan .....	5235

### Tourism

Mr. Norm Miller .....	5236
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne .....	5236

### Minister's comments

Mr. Ted Arnott .....	5236
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	5237

### Birth of member's grandchild

Mr. Michael A. Brown .....	5237
The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters) .....	5237

Continued on inside back cover













